UNESCO

# The Courier

APRIL 1967 - 9 French francs

# travellers' tales

# A time to live...

Photo J. Purcell © Etablissement public du Musée d'Orsay, Paris

## From station to museum

Built between 1898 and 1900, the Gare d'Orsay in central Paris was for some thirty years a mainline railway station. After the station was closed to mainline traffic, the vast central hall with its soaring metal arches was used for a variety of purposes. For some years the station was threatened with demolition, but in 1978, with its adjoining hotel, it was earmarked for conversion into a great modern museum in which French State collections of art of the second half of the nineteenth century could be permanently displayed. In 1986, the new museum—the Musée d'Orsay—opened its doors to the public. Above, view inside the central hall of the museum. The alignment of exhibition rooms and terraces follows the layout of the old railway tracks and platforms. The former station clock can be seen at the far end of the hall.

# Editorial


# April 1987

40th year


Travelling is one of the oldest and most important of human activities. The reasons for the traveller's quest have been many and varied, ranging from early man's search for new hunting grounds to modern man's attempts to conquer space. Impelled by commercial, religious or political motives, travellers have crossed the face of the earth in search of territory. Through initiatory journeys they have sought communication with the invisible world.

This issue of the *Unesco Courier* does not pretend to be a catalogue of all forms of travel, past and present. It focuses instead on the ways in which travel can reveal people and cultures to each other. To show travellers discovering other peoples and other worlds the Editors have compiled an anthology of extracts from travel literature written in many different ages and places. Through anecdotes and reflections chosen to represent the widest possible geographical and cultural spectrum, we see travellers noting the similarities and differences between themselves and those they "discover", in some cases feeling the impact of profound cultural antagonisms. We see them recognizing, often in unexpected forms, the common bond of human experience. We see a slowly emerging realization of the extent of human diversity.

To comply with this general criterion we decided to exclude from the anthology "objective" descriptions of climate, landscape, plant and animal life, customs and forms of political organization, the kind of scientific observations which are made in the course of anthropological and ethnological studies.

The extracts have been grouped in a number of sections. Clearly, many more passages could have been chosen from the rich harvest of world travel writing, but if such great names as Marco Polo, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and Alexander Kinglake are missing from our anthology, it is because we have sought to use the limited space at our disposal to present travellers such as Olaudah Equiano and Jan Myrdal, who are perhaps less well known to an international public, and above all to show that the appetite for travel has taken man to every point of the compass.

Our goal has been to bring together writing which reveals the images, sometimes distorted, which men create of each other when they meet.

**Front cover:** design features an 18th-century Russian wood-cut, one of a series of folk images entitled *The Story of Joseph the Magnificent.*


Document © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris


**Back cover:** Japanese print by Keisai Yoshiku (1833-1904) shows an elegant French lady listening to the travel reminiscences of a cigar-smoking Dutch sailor whose ship is anchored in the harbour. At top of print is an approximate phonetic transcription into Japanese of certain English and Dutch words.


Photo George Ducret © Galerie Janette Ostier, Paris



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**The Courier**

*A window open on the world*

Published monthly in **32 languages** by Unesco
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

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|---|---|---|---|---|
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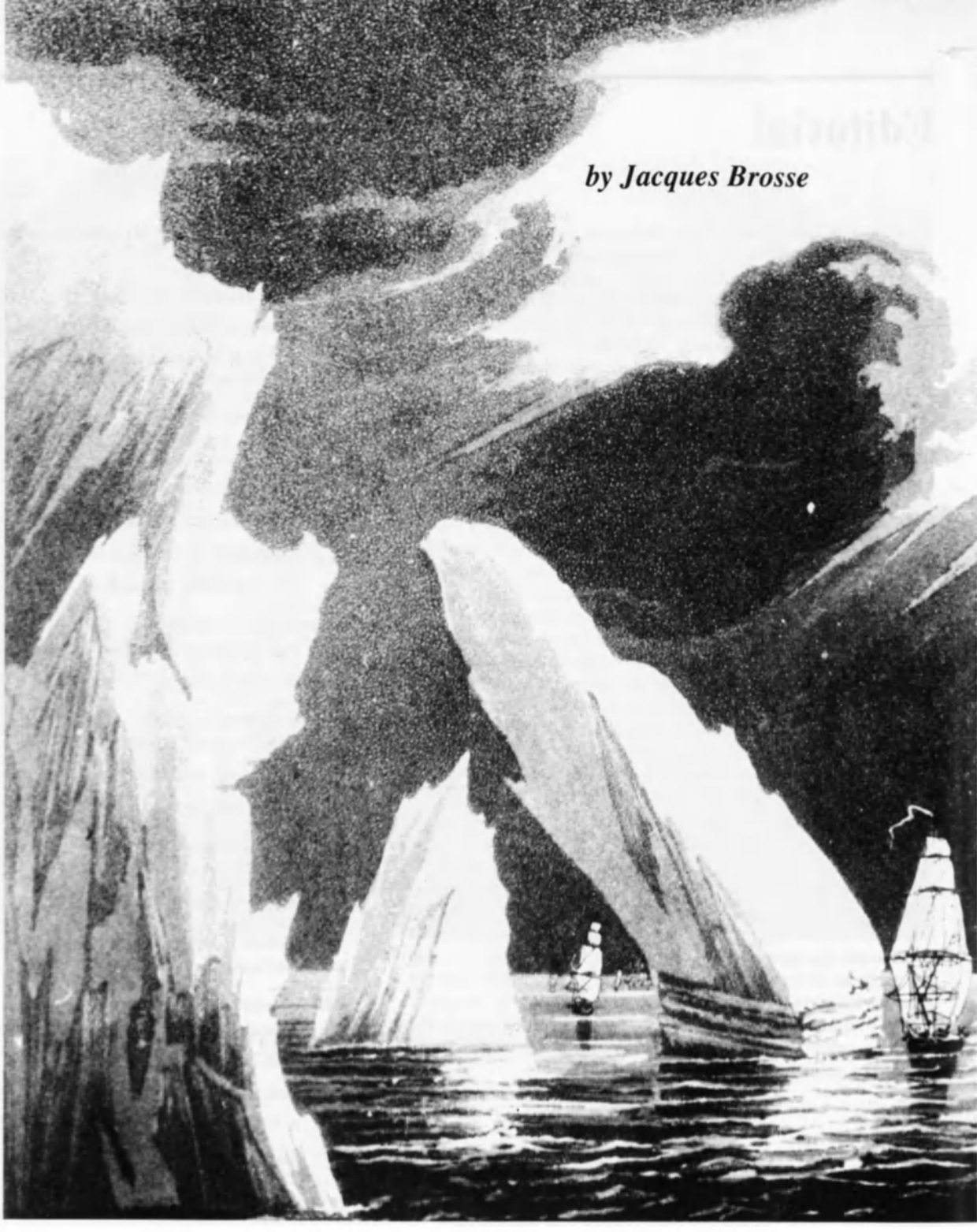
| Arabic | Dutch | Swahili | Greek | |
| Japanese | Portuguese | Croato-Serb | Sinhala | |

A selection in Braille is published quarterly in English, French, Spanish and Korean

ISSN 0041-5278
N° 4 - 1987 - CPD - 87 - 1 - 444 A

*by Jacques Brosse*



IN ancient times, travellers modelled themselves on the heroes whose great deeds were recounted in mythology. By virtue of their semi-divine, semi-human origin, the heroes had a mission to unite the unknown to the known and to bring into communication the human world, the divine empyrean and the Underworld of the dead. They were able to cross the threshold of the Underworld in both directions, and, indeed, this was one of the ordeals that faced them, for, destined though they were to be immortal, they nevertheless had to achieve immortality by travelling to the ends of the earth where no one before them had ever set foot.

So it was that Heracles travelled to the Garden of the Hesperides and then to the Underworld, Jason and his companions sought the Golden Fleece, and the Trojan Aeneas, human son of Aphrodite, wandered from Asia to Africa before founding in Italy a small nation that one day would rule the world. And then there is Ulysses, the prototype of so many travellers. The story of his travels, the *Odyssey,* is the gateway to Greek literature, but it was preceded, many centuries earlier, by the *Epic of Gilgamesh,* the Sumerian hero who travelled far and wide in search of immortality. Similarly, the earliest journeys by the Chinese were made in search of the Isles of the Blest and the Kunlun Mountains, the axis and centre of the world. Certain divinities, too, set off on journeys, and human beings awaited their return with impatience. Thus the Mexicans, to their cost, mistook the army of the Conquistadors for the retinue of Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent. The Hawaiians inevitably interpreted the arrival in the bay of Kealakekua of great ships laden with undreamed-of wealth as the return of the god Lorono, whom they identified with the person of Captain Cook, who perished, a victim of this misapprehension.

Traditionally, a journey is not so much an adventure as a quest. It is true that the decision to leave one's country springs from a desire to break away from familiar surroundings and the sterile stagnation of habit, but an even more powerful factor is determination to be free from one's old self, to embark on the path of self-transformation. The stages of the journey correspond to a process of initiation: they beat time on the march towards mystery; encounters with monsters are symbolic tests to which the future initiate must submit. To his friends and

# The traveller and his quest

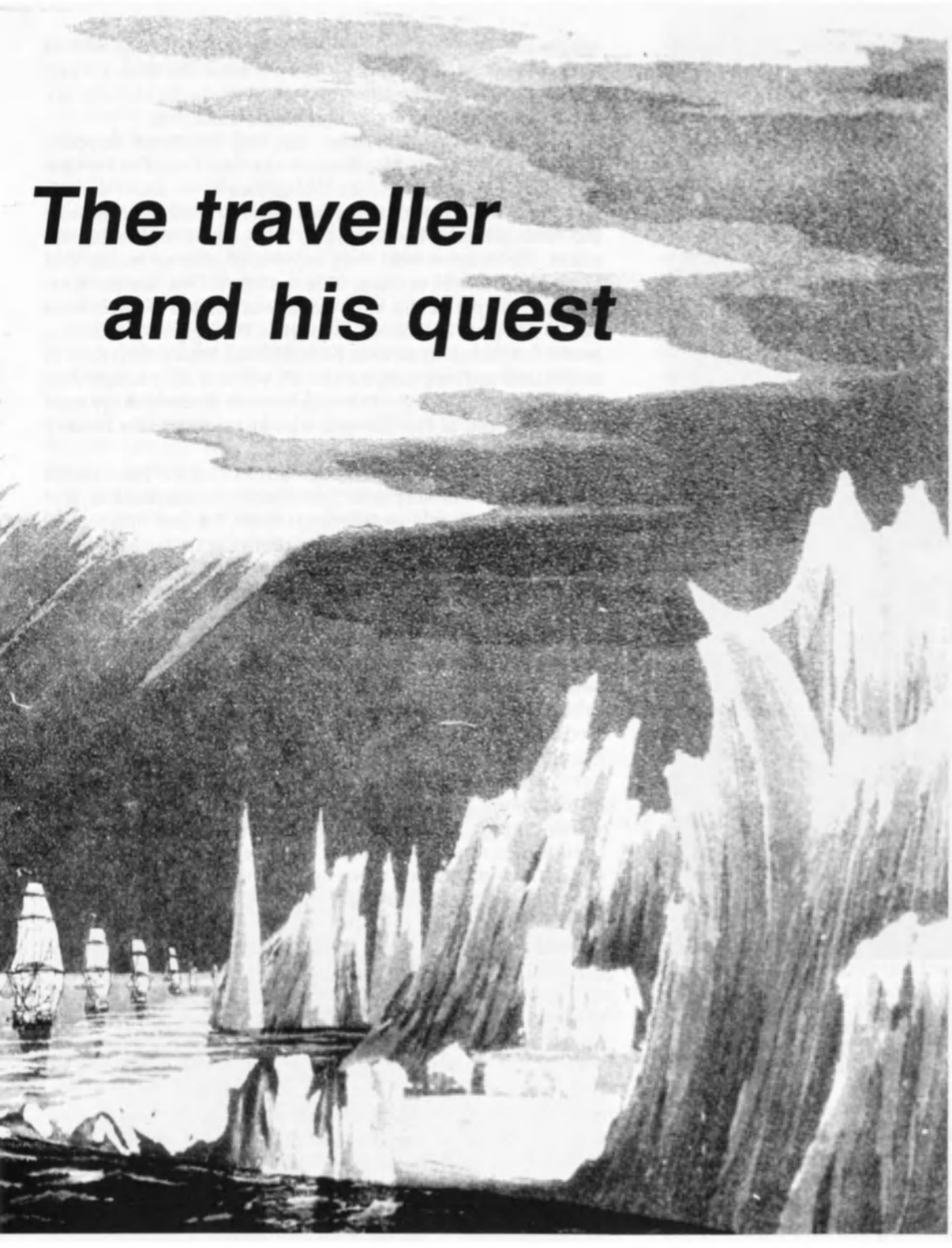


Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Paris

***Passage through the ice. An illustration from* A Voyage of Discovery . . . for the Purpose of Exploring Baffin's Bay *in which the Scottish navigator John Ross (1777-1856) described his first expedition in search of a northwest passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific, in 1818.***

kindred, who admired his recklessness as they watched him go, the returning traveller is no longer the same person. Still trailing clouds of glory from the unknown, he has become a hero.

In extreme cases, the journey may entail no movement at all, and be made wholly within the self. Sometimes it takes place in a kind of waking dream, like Dante's descent into the circles of Hell. There is a tradition of initiatory journeys which culminates in Rabelais's *Pantagruel,* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels,* and includes the *Quest for the Holy Grail.* In the Grail story, knightly exploits are of secondary importance, and the hero can only achieve his aim—the rediscovery of the lost vessel containing the blood of the Redeemer—if his deeds are accompanied by an inner metamorphosis. Lancelot and Perceval only half understood this and failed, whereas Galahad ultimately succeeded, but only by attaining so high a degree of selflessness that he became the reflection of the object of the quest, Jesus Christ. This is the moral of all journeys. They can succeed only if the traveller, setting out in search of the Other, achieves identification with that Other.

Such an esoteric meaning is also to be found in the Chinese and Japanese tales which are probably based on the journey of the Shaman, since Shamanism, later confined to Siberia, was once known throughout Asia. However, it should at this point be emphasized that when the Shaman engages in this dangerous magical undertaking, he is not remotely concerned with personal gain, but is acting as an intermediary between the human community that he represents and the world of the gods, who have chosen him for this office by giving him the power to enter their celestial realm, denied to all others. Likewise, Dante deseends into the circles of Hell, and Galahad seeks the Grail in order to report to others what they have seen and what others cannot see: they reveal the unknown.

We may take these to be imaginary journeys, but this is only a modern interpretation. In the ancient tales, myth and reality are inextricably mingled, making any rationalist interpretation very difficult, since it is not always possible to distinguish the geographical from the symbolic, and a single item of information may be both at once. This is true of the *Odyssey,* and perhaps even of the highly didactic *Voyage of Brendan,* a tale of adventure which was extremely popular in the Middle Ages;

Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

***Masked man from the Sandwich Islands (today the Hawaii archipelago) as depicted in the atlas of the third voyage (1776-1780) of the English navigator James Cook.***

but it is also true, despite the fact that its authors were merchants, of the *Periplus of Hannon,* by the Carthaginian Hanno, who in all likelihood explored the western coast of Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea around 450 B.C., and of the travels of Marco Polo, which are also a "description of the world", and hence a cosmology. We should, after all, remember that until his death Christopher Columbus was convinced that he had discovered, not the New World, but the islands of Japan and the coasts of China.

Until the great transoceanic expeditions of the Renaissance, every journey took place in two dimensions, one vertical, or, as we would nowadays say, subjective, and the other horizontal, situated in physical space, and hence objective. It should be borne in mind that this ambiguity, which modern minds see as a defect, then gave a journey its real meaning. How could it have been otherwise in medieval Europe, where the typical travellers were the pilgrim and his warlike counterpart the crusader? These men travelled so far afield to seek forgiveness for their sins and the certainty of salvation. What they found at the end of their journey was their true home, Jerusalem or the New Jerusalem. The few travellers' tales that have survived from this period were written in this spirit; they are guides to pilgrimages in the Holy Land.

Descriptions written by Chinese monks of their visits to the holy places of Buddhism reflect similar preoccupations. But these monks were scholars. On their journeys to India they sought holy scriptures rather than relics, and writings such as those chronicling the journeys of Fa Xian in the fifth century, and of Yi Jing and especially of Xuan Zang in the seventh, are remarkable historical and geographical documents.

It was for religious reasons, too, that the Arabs travelled throughout the East. Muslims are virtually forced to become travellers, since one of their obligations is to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime. Furthermore, since the Arab presence had spread to a large part of the old continent, the masters who were capable of passing on the oral teachings essential to Islam were scattered. The faithful Muslim, eager to perfect his knowledge, was obliged to travel from one to another, and hence to journey throughout the Islamic world, but wherever he went he would find others of his faith to understand and help him. As a result, we have, for example, the records of the journeys of Ibn Djubayr, in the twelfth century, and later those of Ibn Battuta, who in a quarter of a century travelled across half the world.

Another consequence of the spread of Islam was the creation by the Arabs, who were skilled merchants and excellent navigators, of the only real international trade, by land and sea, of medieval times, and in particular the spice trade. Merchants who travelled as far as China and Indonesia gathered information which Arab geographers pieced together to form the most comprehensive picture of the Orient of their day. Highly cultivated men, these Muslim scholars were astronomers as well as geographers, travellers as well as theorists. With them, travel writing began to acquire investigative qualities. Their aim was to be precise, rational—one might almost say scientific—on the model of the "inquiry" (the true sense of the word *historiai)* of Herodotus in Greece, in the fifth century B.C., for the Arabs were heirs to the Greeks. In the heart of the Middle Ages, the Muslims were already modern travellers.

Our purpose in dwelling on the origins of travel writing has been to describe the mentality of the earliest travellers, and their status which set them apart from other members of the community—for they constitute the prototype of all later travellers.

During the thirty years or so which elapsed between the expeditions of Christopher Columbus and the first voyage round the world in 1520-1522 by Magellan, a period which saw the successive discoveries by Westerners of America, of the route to India and of the Pacific Ocean, travel acquired an entirely new meaning: it became secularized and limited to a single dimension, the horizontal. The aim was no longer to make contact with the Other World, but with other human societies. But there was no feeling of fellowship with the members of these societies; they were pagans and first had to be converted.

With few exceptions, sixteenth-century travellers tended to be cast in the new mould of the conquistador. They were no longer curious, cautious individuals, but leaders of armed expeditions, violent and avaricious, engaged simultaneously in the forced conversion of indigenous populations, the conquest of their land and the furtherance of their own interests. God and the King, whom they served so well, owed them this reward. These men were Portuguese and Spaniards, later Dutch, and then British and French, the builders of colonial empires. Missionaries and merchants followed close on their heels. The image which they exported, and which they imposed on Amerindians and Asians alike, was to be seen for many years by these peoples as the very face of the Christian West.

And yet, on the fringes of this aggressive policy, the strong impulse of curiosity reactivated by the Renaissance was still flourishing: the humanist desire to know the whole universe in all its natural and human diversity. This attitude is to be found in the travelling naturalists, from the Frenchman Pierre Belon and the Italian Prospero Alpini in the sixteenth century to the Swede Peter Thunberg in the eighteenth century and the Scot David Douglas at the beginning of the nineteenth. These missions, which could not have been more peaceable, undertaken individually by determined men whose whole lives were

devoted to increasing the store of human knowledge, are the positive counterweight to a brutality that was often cynical.

Such a tendency, which indicates the existence of a new type of traveller, is not always given much prominence by historians of travel. It continued without interruption until the early nineteenth century, reaching its apogee during the "Enlightenment", when, shortly after 1750, great sea-borne expeditions set out to explore what remained to be discovered in the Southern Hemisphere as far as the Antarctic continent, the existence of which was hotly disputed. Their mission was to fill in the empty spaces on the map, and to construct a fuller and more accurate picture of the world.

Such was the achievement of Captain James Cook on his three voyages. Like his immediate predecessor, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, and like his successors who drew inspiration from the methods he tested, Cook was accompanied by a skilled team of scientists who were to draw up a systematic inventory, hitherto lacking, of animal and plant life. Thanks to highly detailed accounts of his voyages of discovery, we are familiar with the young and enthusiastic scientists who willingly complied with the discipline that is indispensable at sea, enduring harsh conditions and often facing mortal dangers.

It is remarkable that many of the survivors followed the example of their model and hero Cook and immediately set out on fresh voyages lasting between three and five years. The son of a farmworker, and a sailor who rose from the ranks, Cook was not only an experienced navigator, whose authority was tempered by his constant concern for the well-being of his crew. More surprising, to us, is his generous attitude towards the peoples he visited. Not only did Cook never use violence except when he saw no alternative, but he tried to understand totally unfamiliar customs and beliefs with an unprecedented open-mindedness and with such minute attention to detail that, autodidact though he was, he unwittingly founded the science of ethnography, which involves not only observation but also dialogue.

***Engraving (c. 1857) by the French painter Edgar Degas (1834-1917) shows Dante and Virgil (crowned with laurel leaves, left) at the gates of Hell, an episode from Dante's* Inferno.**

Photo © All Rights Reserved

However, Cook never went to the opposite extreme to the colonialists—he did not embrace the cult of the "noble savage" as practised by late eighteenth-century "philosophers" such as Jean-François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, who for a while shared their illusion, but who was forced to abandon it, and would proclaim: "They write their books by the fireside, but I have been travelling for thirty years," shortly before he and his subordinates were massacred by these "children of nature".

Unfortunately, this golden age did not last long. The Frenchman Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville, discoverer of the Antarctic continent, and even his rivals, the American Charles Wilkes and the Englishman James Clark Ross, were still, as late as 1843, Cook's disciples. But with their deaths and with the ending of the great voyages of discovery, a certain attitude of mind disappeared. Humanitarian idealism gave way to the mercantile concerns of the rising bourgeoisie. All too often, the religious missions aided and abetted the great powers and were the vanguard of armed occupation.

Nevertheless, the fever of discovery and the admiration aroused by natural rather than supernatural wonders continued unabated in the scientific explorers, of whom Alexander von Humboldt, in the early years of the nineteenth century, was an outstanding example. He belonged to a rich and noble family and was one of the last humanists to possess a truly universal culture. As such, the Prussian Humboldt seems to be the opposite of Cook, the empirical Englishman, and yet, in many respects, they are alike and complementary. The *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent During the Years 1799-1804* was long used as a model by overland explorers, as were the *Voyages* of Cook by navigators.

Worthy heirs to both these men were the Englishman Charles Darwin on board the *Beagle,* Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russel Wallace, hacking their way through the splendid, fearsome Amazon jungle, and, lastly, the solitary travellers who penetrated to the unknown heart of the African continent, from the Scot Mungo Park and the Frenchman René Caillié, to the fearless missionary David Livingstone. But the death of Livingstone in 1873 marked the passing of a certain type of modest, disinterested hero, with qualities which even his immediate successor, the Anglo-American journalist Stanley, did not embody.

From this time onwards, exploration increasingly came to serve capitalist interests, and became the prelude to a new form of subjection. Although the fascination was still alive in the last of the explorers—the discoverers of the polar regions—their adventures came increasingly to resemble sporting achievements.

What remains of the spirit which inspired these adventurous travellers, in an age when any tourist who takes a plane can cast himself in the role of a hero? How far does contact really go between this new type of traveller, the modern tourist, and the people he meets on his travels? How far, at heart, does he care about such things? Perhaps the only future left for travel is space exploration. But it is still too early to tell. ■

**JACQUES BROSSE,** *French naturalist; has written many works on exploration and travel, including* Great Voyages of Discovery: Circumnavigators and Scientists, 1764-1843 *(English translation by Facts on File Publications, New York/Oxford, 1983), and the first biography of the French explorer Alexandra David-Néel, entitled* Alexandra David-Néel, L'aventure et la spiritualité *(Retz, 1978).*

# The potency of myth

In the minds of European explorers of medieval times and the Renaissance, legend and fact were inextricably mingled. Men like Vespucci, Magellan and Columbus were influenced by the writings of earlier travellers such as Marco Polo (whose *Description of the World* was one of Columbus's favourite books) who often wove a thread of fantasy into their first-hand observations. Their world-view was also conditioned by the limitations and inaccuracies of contemporary cartography, as well as a number of tenacious myths which persisted until much later times.

## The earthly Paradise

### *by Christopher Columbus*

***In the time of the Genoese navigator Christopher Columbus (1450 or 1451-1506), the existence of an earthly Paradise was unquestioned. The origin of this myth is found in the Bible, where it is written (in* Genesis, *II. 8): "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." For Columbus the quest for the earthly Paradise was an obsession which lasted throughout his search for a western sea route to China and India. His dream was sustained by the luxuriant plant and animal life, the mildness of the climate and the abundant waters of the New World. When, during his third voyage in 1498, he discovered the mouth of the Orinoco on the coast of South America, he thought that he had finally located the earthly Paradise, which he imagined to be at the source of this vast effluence of fresh water.***

HOLY Scripture testifies that Our Lord made the earthly Paradise in which he placed the Tree of Life. From it there flowed four main rivers: the Ganges in India, the Tigris and the Euphrates in Asia, which cut through a mountain range and form Mesopotamia and flow into Persia, and the Nile, which rises in Ethiopia and flows into the sea at Alexandria.

I do not find and have never found any Greek or Latin writings which definitely state the worldly situation of the earthly Paradise, nor have I seen any world map which establishes its position except by deduction. Some place it at the source of the Nile in Ethiopia. But many people have travelled in these lands and found nothing in the climate or altitude to confirm this theory, or to prove that the waters of the Flood which covered, etc. ... reached there. Some heathens tried to show by argument that it was in the Fortunate Islands (which are the Canaries); and St. Isidore, Bede, Strabo, the Master of Scholastic History,* St. Ambrose and Scotus and all learned theologians agree that the earthly Paradise is in the East, etc.

I have already told what I have learnt about this hemisphere and its shape, and I believe that, if I pass below the Equator, on reaching these higher regions I shall find a much cooler climate and a greater difference in the stars and waters. Not that I believe it possible to sail to the extreme summit or that it is covered by water, or that it is even possible to go there. For I believe that the earthly Paradise lies here, which no one can enter except by God's leave. I believe that this land which your Highnesses have commanded me to discover is very great, and that there are many other lands in the south of which there have never been reports. I do not hold that the earthly Paradise has the form of a rugged mountain, as it is shown in pictures, but that it lies at the summit of what I have described as the stalk of a pear, and that by gradually approaching it one begins, while still at a great

Photo © Bulloz, Paris. Musée du Louvre, Paris

*Detail from* The Earth *or* The Earthly Paradise, *painting on copper by the Flemish artist Jan Brueghel, known as "Velvet Brueghel", (1568-1625).*

distance, to climb towards it. As I have said, I do not believe that anyone can ascend to the top. I do believe, however, that, distant though it is, these waters may flow from there to this place which I have reached, and form this lake. All this provides great evidence of the earthly Paradise, because the situation agrees with the beliefs of those holy and wise theologians and all the signs strongly associated with this idea. For I have never read or heard of such a quantity of fresh water flowing so close to the salt and flowing into it, and the very temperate climate provides a further confirmation. If this river does not flow out of the earthly Paradise, the marvel is still greater. For I do not believe that there is so great and deep a river anywhere in the world. ■

"Letter to the Catholic Kings on the third voyage to the Indies (1498)." *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, edited and translated by J.M. Cohen, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, U.K., 1969.

* Petrus Comestor, author of *Historia scolastica* (translator's note).

Photo © Rojas Mix, Paris

*This depiction of an Amazon as a symbol of America appears in a book on world costumes, published in 1784, by the French writer and artist Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauveur (1757-1810).*

# In search of the Amazons

## *by Cristóbal de Acuña*

***According to ancient Greek mythology, the Amazons were warlike huntresses who burned off the right breasts of their daughters so that they could use the bow and arrow more freely. In the 16th century, a Spanish explorer in South America, Francisco de Orellana, claimed that he had fought against a band of Indians resembling Amazons, and accordingly the river Marañón, near which this skirmish took place, was later renamed the Amazon (although some believe that the name is derived from an Indian word). When they heard this story, several travellers in South America set out in search of the Amazons. One of these travellers was a learned Spanish Jesuit, Father Cristóbal de Acuña (1597-1675), who in 1639 took part in an early expedition to explore the Amazon region. (Even a century later, in the "Age of the Enlightenment", a scientific explorer in South America such as Charles Marie de la Condamine still took the myth of the Amazons seriously.)***

A hundred and fifty kilometres below the last village of the Tupinambas, as one travels down the River Amazon, one comes upon a tributary to the north which flows from the province of the Amazons, and which is known to the local people as the Cumuriz. This river takes its name from the Indian communities dwelling at its mouth. Above these are the Apotos ... Then come the Iagaris, and beyond them the Guacaris, the fortunate tribe that enjoys the favours of the Amazons. The Guacaris have built their village on mountains of stupendous height (the Guyana Range). One mountain in this range is called Tacamiaba. Its summit rises well clear of the others, and it is barren, being constantly buffeted by the winds. Here live the Amazons.

These women live together in isolation and protect themselves without any help from men. However, at certain specific times of year they are visited by their neighbours, the Guacaris. When the latter arrive, the Amazons run for their weapons for fear of an ambush. But as soon as they recognize their friends, they all hurry down to meet the boats of the newcomers. Each woman takes a hammock from a boat and goes to hang it up in her home. Then she lies down and awaits the men. A few days later, the Amazons' guests go home, returning without fail the following season. The girls that are born of these unions are raised by their mothers. They are taught to work and to bear arms. As for the boys, nobody knows exactly what becomes of them. I have been told by an Indian who, in his youth, went with his father to one of these assignations, that the following year the Amazons hand back to the children's fathers any males to whom they have given birth. But, as a rule, it is thought that they put these male children to death. I cannot be certain.

Be this as it may, these women own treasures that could enrich the whole world. The mouth of the river on whose banks they live is situated 20° south of the Equator. ■

*Nuevo descubrimiento del gran río de las Amazonas el que fue y se hizo por orden de su Majestad el año 1639 por las provincias de Quito en los Reynos del Perú, 1641.* ("New discovery of the great river of the Amazons, made on the order of His Majesty the year 1639 in the provinces of Quito in the Kingdoms of Peru, 1641")

# The first men on the Moon

## *by Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin*

*An old dream came true on 21 July 1969, when the two American astronauts, Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, became the first men to set foot on the Moon. At right, some of their remarks on that historic occasion. A cosmic symbol from time immemorial and the source of countless myths, legends and cults, the Earth's nearest neighbour in space at last showed its true face. From Antiquity to modern times, the Moon has inspired many feats of imaginative writing. In the 17th century, the French author Cyrano de Bergerac wrote a novel of imaginary travel in which a small sailing boat flew to the Moon powered by evaporating dew, and in the 19th century, the heroes of Jules Verne's* From the Earth to the Moon *orbited the Moon in a comfortably furnished ballistic shell. In the 1950s, the characters drawn by the Belgian cartoonist Hergé (Georges Rémi, 1907-1983) made an eventful trip to the Moon which has already fascinated two generations of readers, many of whom find it hard not to think of Hergé's fictional hero Tintin as the first human being to walk on the Moon ...*

***Armstrong:*** Okay, Houston,* I'm on the porch.
***Houston:*** Roger, Neil.
***Aldrin:*** Halt where you are a minute, Neil.
***Armstrong:*** Okay.
***Aldrin:*** Everything's nice and straight in here.
***Armstrong:*** Okay, can you pull the door open a little more?
***Aldrin:*** Right.
***Houston:*** We're getting a picture on the TV.
***Aldrin:*** You've got a good picture, huh?
***Houston:*** There's a great deal of contrast in it and currently it's upside down on monitor. But we can make out a fair amount of detail.
***Armstrong:*** Okay, will you verify the position, the opening I ought to have on the camera.
***Houston:*** The what? We can see you coming down the ladder now.
***Armstrong:*** I'm at the foot of the ladder. The LM** footpads are only depressed in the surface about one or two inches, although the surface appears to be very, very fine-grained as you get close to it. It's almost like a powder. It's very fine. I'm going to step off the LM now.
That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.
The surface is fine and powdery. I can pick it up loosely with my toe. It does adhere in fine layers like powdered charcoal to the sole and the sides of my boots. I only go in a small fraction of an inch, maybe an eighth of an inch, but I can see the footprints of my boots and the treads in the fine sandy particles. ...
Actually no trouble to walk around.
It's quite dark here in the shadow and a little hard for me to see if I have good footing. I'll work my way over into the sunlight here without looking directly into the sun. Looking up at the LM, I'm standing directly in the shadow now looking up at ... in the windows and I can see everything quite clearly. The light is sufficiently brightly backlighted into the front of the LM that everything is clearly visible.
I'll step out and take some of my first pictures here.
***Aldrin:*** Are you going to get the contingency sample? Okay. That's good.
***Armstrong:*** The contingency sample is down and it's up. Like it's a little difficult to dig through the crust. It's very interesting. It's a very soft surface but here and there where I plug with the contingency sample collector I run into very hard surface but it appears to be very cohesive material of the same sort. I'll try to get a rock in here.
***Houston:*** Oh, that looks beautiful from here, Neil.
***Armstrong:*** It has a stark beauty all its own. It's like much of the high desert of the United States. It's different but it's very pretty out here. Be advised that a lot of the rock samples out here, the hard rock samples have what appears to be vesicles in the surface.
***Aldrin:*** Ready for me to come out?
***Armstrong:*** Yeah. Just stand by a second, I'll move this over the handrail.
***Aldrin:*** Okay?
***Armstrong:*** All right, that's got it. Are you ready?
***Aldrin:*** All set. ...
How far are my feet from the ...
***Armstrong:*** You're right at the edge of the porch.
***Aldrin:*** Small little foot movement. Porch. Arching of the back ... without any trouble at all. Now I want to back up and partially close the hatch—making sure not to lock it on my way out.
***Armstrong:*** Good thought ...
***Aldrin:*** That's our home for the next couple of hours; we want to take care of it. I'm on the top step. It's a very simple matter to hop down from one step to the next.
***Armstrong:*** Yes, I found that to be very comfortable, and walking is also very comfortable, Houston. You've got three more steps and then a long one.
***Aldrin:*** I'm going to leave that one foot up there and both hands down to about the fourth rung up.
***Armstrong:*** A little more. About another inch. There you got it. That's a good step.
***Aldrin:*** About a three footer. Beautiful view.
***Armstrong:*** Ain't that somethin'? ■

Photo © IPS, Paris

*Edwin E. Aldrin, the second man to walk on the Moon, descends from Apollo 11's lunar module, which rests on the dusty surface of the Sea of Tranquillity.*

* City in Texas, USA, and location of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, from which NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) manages the manned flights of the United States astronaut programme.

** LM = Lunar Module, the vehicle used to carry two of the three astronauts from the Apollo 11 spacecraft to the surface of the Moon and then back to the spacecraft.

# The discoverers discovered

On their great voyages of discovery, European explorers encountered other peoples, other climates. Their idea of the world changed. A world of confrontation, sometimes outright opposition, between explorers and those they "discovered" replaced a world-picture rooted in fantasy and myth. An awareness of the differences between civilizations began to emerge.

## Mass to the sound of gunfire

### *by Ferdinand Magellan/ Antonio Pigafetta*

*A Portuguese navigator in the service of the Spanish crown, Fernão de Magalhães, (Ferdinand Magellan, c. 1480-1521), sought the western route to the "Spice Islands", in particular the Moluccas, for trading purposes. But his voyage, which supplied practical proof that the Earth was round, had many repercussions as a result of the account of it brought back by Antonio Pigafetta, chronicler of the expedition. Pigafetta was one of the few survivors of this first voyage around the world, which lasted almost three years and cost Magellan his life. In March 1521, the navigator reached the Philippines.*

ON Easter Sunday, the last day of March, the Captain sent the chaplain ashore early in the morning to celebrate Mass. And the interpreter went with him to tell the king that we were not landing in order to dine with him, but simply to hear Mass.

When he heard this, the king sent two dead pigs. And when the time came to say the Mass, the Captain went ashore with fifty men, unarmed except for their swords and each one dressed as decently as it was possible to be. Before the barques reached shore, our ships fired six rounds of artillery as a sign of peace.

The two kings were there as we disembarked and graciously received our Captain and placed him between them, then we went to the place prepared for the celebration of Mass, which was not far from the shore. Before the Mass began, the Captain threw a quantity of musk-rose water over the two kings. And when the Mass was offered, these two kings went to kiss the cross like us, but they made no offering. At the moment of the Elevation of the body of Our Lord, they were kneeling as we were and worshipped our Lord with their hands joined in prayer. And the ships fired all their guns at the Elevation of the body of Our Lord.

When Mass had been said, each one did his Christian duty, receiving Our Lord. Then the Captain got his men to demonstrate swordsmanship, which greatly pleased these kings. Next he had a cross brought, with the nails and the crown, to which these kings bowed down. And the Captain had it explained to them that these things which he was showing them were the sign of the Emperor his master and lord, who had charged and commanded him to place it everywhere he should go or pass by. And he told them that he wished to erect it in their country for their benefit, because if some Spanish ships later came to these islands, when they saw this cross they would know that we had stayed there. And thus they would do nothing to harm them, neither their people nor their belongings. If they took any of their people prisoner, they would let them go at once on being shown this sign.

Furthermore, the Captain told them that it was necessary that this cross should be erected on the summit of the highest mountain in their land, so that on seeing the said cross each day they should worship it and that, if they did so, neither thunder, lightning nor tempest could harm them.

These kings thanked the Captain and said that they would gladly do so. Then he had them questioned as to whether they were Moors or Gentiles, and what they believed in. They replied that their only form of worship was to join their hands while looking at the sky, and that they called their god Aba. On hearing these words the Captain was filled with joy. ... So the Captain had him [the first king] asked if he had any enemies who made war against him, and that if there were any he would go and defeat them with his men and his ships in order to bring them to obedience. The king, thanking him, replied that there were two islands on which the people were his enemies. However, this was not a good time to go and attack them. The Captain therefore said to him that if by God's grace he should return to this country, he would bring so many men that he would force them into obeying the king. Then he had the interpreter tell them that he was going to dine and that he would come back afterwards to have the cross erected on the summit of the mountain; the two kings said that they were well pleased and, on this, they embraced the Captain, and parted. ■

*Magellan's Voyage Around the World*, by Antonio Pigafetta.

*Painting on the ceiling of a church at Cebu (Philippines), where Magellan landed in 1521, shows the navigator having a cross erected.*

Photo © Alan Cash, London

# Saved by the Indians

*by Jacques Cartier*

***One of the most important exploits by early European explorers in America was the discovery of the St. Lawrence River in 1535 by the Breton sailor Jacques Cartier (1491-1557). The Indian guides and interpreters who accompanied him during his explorations of Canada were invaluable allies. They taught Cartier about the country's geography and resources, and familiarized him with Indian customs and language. On his second journey, during a long and severe Canadian winter based in Stadaconé [the Indian name for Quebec], an epidemic of scurvy claimed the lives of many of his men. One of Cartier's interpreters showed him the antidote: a herbal tea rich in vitamin C.***

Drawing C.W. Jefferys © Ryerson Press, Toronto

*Jacques Cartier meets a group of Indians on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, during his second expedition to Canada, in 1535.*

ONE day, our captain, seeing the sickness gaining such a hold and his men so severely stricken by it, set out from the fort and, walking on the ice, saw approaching him a company of people from Stadaconé, and among them Dom Agaya, whom the captain had seen ten or twelve days previously sorely distempered, with the same sickness from which his men were suffering; for one of his legs was so swollen at the knee, that it was the thickness of the body of a two-year-old child, wholly nerveless, while his teeth were loose and decayed and his gums rotting and foul. The captain, seeing Dom Agaya healthy and nimble, was overjoyed, hoping to learn from him how he had been cured, in order that he might bring help and succour to his men. And when they drew near to the fort, the captain asked him how he had been cured of his sickness. Dom Agaya replied that he had been cured with the juice of the leaves of a tree and the crushed leaves thereof, and that this was the sole remedy for the sickness. The captain then inquired of him whether there might not be such trees nearby, and whether he would show him some, that he might heal his servant, who had fallen sick of the disease in Canada while dwelling in the house of Lord Donnacona; for he did not wish to reveal how many of his companions were sick. Then Dom Agaya sent two women with our captain to seek out such trees, and they brought back nine or ten branches; and they showed us that the bark and the leaves must be pounded and then boiled in water; that water must then be drunk one day in two, and the residue placed on the sick and swollen legs; and they told us that this tree cured all disease. In their language they call this tree *annedda.**

Soon afterwards the captain had a brew made for the sick men to drink, and none wished to try it, save one or two, who boldly put it to the test. As soon as they had drunk of it, they felt relief forthwith, which was indeed a miraculous thing; for of all the diseases afflicting them, they were cured and recovered their health, after having drunk twice or thrice of the brew; so much so that one of the companions who had been sick of the pox for five or six years before this new sickness was altogether cured by this medicine. When these things were seen and known, there was such a press for the said medicine that the men would have murdered one another for it; so that a tree, as tall and broad as any I have ever seen, was used up in less than a week, and wrought such an effect, that if all the physicians of Louvain and Montpellier had been present, with all the drugs of Alexandria, they would not have done in a year what that tree accomplished in a week; for we had such advantage of it, that all who made use of it were cured, and recovered their health, praise be to God. ■

* It has not been possible to determine exactly which tree was used, but it is generally thought to have been the Canadian hemlock spruce.

*Voyages au Canada. Avec les relations des voyages en Amérique de Gonneville, Verrazano et Roberval.*

# Festivities in the Friendly Islands

*by James Cook*

***The great English navigator and explorer, Captain James Cook (1728-1779), wrote a classic account of his voyages in the Pacific. Cook made a great contribution to geography by dispelling the myth that an Antarctic continent reached from the South Pole as far as temperate latitudes, and by bequeathing to posterity a remarkable collection of extremely accurate maps. To his investigations of the lives and customs of the peoples he encountered he brought such a high degree of rigour and objectivity that he is regarded as one of the first ethnographers. During his third voyage, in 1777, he visited the Friendly Islands (Tonga) where he had first landed three years before.***

FEENOU* had expressed a desire to see the marines go through the military exercise. As I was desirous to gratify his curiosity, I ordered them all ashore, from both ships, in the morning. After they had performed various evolutions, and fired several volleys, with which the numerous body of spectators seemed well pleased, the chief entertained us, in his turn, with an exhibition, which, as was acknowledged by us all, was performed with a dexterity and exactness far surpassing the specimen we had given of our military manoeuvres. It was a kind of a dance, so entirely different from anything I had ever seen, that I fear I can give no description that will convey any tolerable idea of it to my readers. It was performed by men; and one hundred and five persons bore their parts in it. Each of them had in his hand an instrument neatly made, shaped somewhat like a paddle, of two feet and a half in length, with a small handle and a thin blade, so that they were very light. With these instruments they made many and various flourishes, each of which was accompanied with a different movement. At first the performers ranged themselves in three lines, and, by various evolutions, each man changed his station in such a manner that those who had been in the rear came into the front. Nor did they remain long in the same position. At one time they extended themselves into one line, they then formed into a semicircle, and lastly into two square columns. While this last movement was executing, one of them advanced and performed an antic dance before me, with which the whole ended.

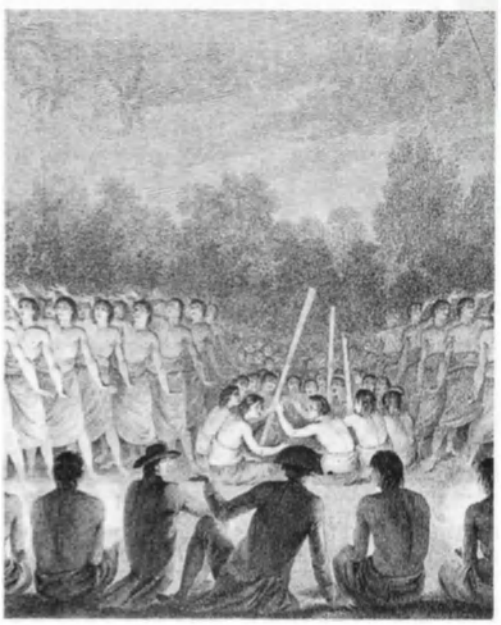
The musical instruments consisted of two drums, or rather two hollow logs of wood, from which some varied notes were produced by beating on them with two sticks. It did not, however, appear to me that the dancers were much assisted by these sounds, but by a chorus of vocal music, in which all the performers joined at

the same time. Their song was not destitute of pleasing melody, and all their corresponding motions were executed with so much skill, that the numerous body of dancers seemed to act as if they were one great machine. It was the opinion of every one of us that such a performance would have met with universal applause on an European theatre; and it so far exceeded any attempt we had made to entertain them, that they seemed to picque themselves upon the superiority they had over us. As to our musical instruments, they held none of them in the least esteem, except the drum, and even that they did not think equal to their own.

In order to give them a more favourable opinion of English amusements, and to leave their minds fully impressed with the deepest sense of our superior attainments, I directed some fireworks to be got ready; and, after it was dark, played them off in the presence of Feenou, the other chiefs, and a vast concourse of their people. Our water and sky-rockets, in particular, pleased and astonished them beyond all conception; and the scale was now turned in our favour. ■

* Feenou, the chief, was considered to be ruler of the entire archipelago.

*Captain Cook's Voyages of Discovery*, Everyman's Library, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1948.



*Captain Cook watches men of the Friendly Islands (today Tonga) perform a nocturnal dance, during his third voyage (1776-1780).*

Photo © Bulloz, Paris

# A Russian on the coast of Alaska

## *by Grigori Shelikhov*

***In 1740-1741 a party of Russian explorers with their Danish guide, Vitus Jonassen Bering, discovered Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. A fur trade was established in anarchic conditions and continued until it was organized on a sounder basis by Grigori Shelikhov (1747-1797), an enterprising Russian merchant. Shelikhov assembled all the merchants into a single "Company of America", which set up trading posts on almost all the Aleutian Islands. Between 1783 and 1786, Shelikhov comprehensively explored the islands, of which he made the first detailed and accurate maps. His descriptions of the way of life of the inhabitants and of their surroundings are ethnographic documents of great value. The strait between Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula still bears his name.***

MEN, women and girls pierce the sides of their noses; they likewise pierce their ears and their lower lips; some men also have stitching around their necks, but not many, and each man has his lower lip split, so that at first glance he seems to have two mouths. In the hole made in the side of the nose they insert a long piece of bone, and those who own beads and coral dangle these from their ears, their lips and their noses, and consider them altogether admirable and the finest of ornaments. They never shave their chins, not all of them wear shirts, their feet are bare, and indoors they go about wholly unclothed except for a scrap of animal skin or flowers and grass which they wear around their waists, knotted in front. They wear parkas made from the skins of beaver, fox or bear, feathers, or the skins of Arctic hare, muskrat or lynx. There is a type of parka with a special name which is made from the intestines of sea-lions, seals and whales. On their heads they wear headgear fashioned out of pine roots and grass, plaited together to form curved and concave wooden caps. To hunt marine animals they use harpoons, which they hurl from platforms, and for warfare they have bows and spears made of iron, copper, bone and stone. Their axes are of a special type, consisting of a small piece of iron. Their pipes and knives are of iron and bone, and their needles are of iron. ... Before our arrival, the women manufactured their needles themselves. Thread is made of gut, and their crockery is made of wood, the horns of wild sheep, clay or hollowed stone.

They have large and small boats which are made, not of planks but of skins, sewn over the framework so as to be watertight, with just one opening, and these they use to fish or to hunt marine fauna. In the rivers they fish by building small dams with stones and impaling the fish on pointed implements similar to spears; in the end of these is a notch into which they insert a stone or iron pin held in place with bone pegs and attached by a length of gut to a piece of wood. In the gulfs and bays hollowed out by the sea, they use harpoons to kill the larger fish when they emerge from the water. They make fire by friction on wood; for lamps they use the blubber of seals, bears, sea-lions or whales, which they burn in stone receptacles, dipping lengths of grass into these to serve as wicks.

When visitors arrive, they greet them by daubing their own faces with red dye and putting on their finest apparel; they beat tambourines and perform a dance, brandishing their weapons of war; the guests themselves arrive as if for a battle. As soon as they approach the banks, the hosts jump into the sea and wade chest deep. They drag large and small boats onto the banks as fast as they can, and then hurry to lift out their guests, whom they carry one by one on their backs to the place chosen for the feast; there, they seat them in their allotted places, and all remain silent until they have eaten and drunk to satiety. The first attention shown, and the most keenly appreciated, is to give cold water to the guests, after which

*Frontispiece of a Russian edition of Grigori Shelikhov's account of his travels, published at St. Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1793.*

Photo © APN, Moscow

"Peregrinations of the Russian merchant Grigori Shelikhov from Okhotsk to the coasts of America by the Eastern Ocean (1791)"

the boys serve out the food—fat, a mixture of fats, seal, whale and sea-lion. They also serve berries, and in particular red whortleberries, cranberries, bilberries and Arctic brambles, to which they add various roots; the berries are not mixed. They also provide dried fish known as *pokola,* and the meat of various animals and birds, according to the best that each has at his disposal. Salt is unknown to them. Each dish and each drink must be tasted first by the head of the household, otherwise the guests will not touch it; the occurrence of poisons is, apparently, not unknown. When the head of the household has tasted each dish, he passes it to the first of his guests, who helps himself and passes it on to his neighbour, and so on from first to last. Anything left is sent back to the first, who sets it aside, and, when they leave, the guests carry away all these leftovers with them. ■

# The swimming postman

## *by Alexander von Humboldt*

***When thirty-year-old Alexander von Humboldt set off for South America in 1799, with his friend Aimé Bonpland, he had already studied a vast range of subjects, including botany, chemistry, mineralogy, and galvanism—the theories of the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani. Naturalist, explorer, geographer and geologist, historian and politician, this Prussian baron (1769-1859) and polymath qualifies, through the objectivity of his descriptions of the Indians, as a founder of American anthropology, ethnology and archaeology. In 1802 he was in Peru, where he mapped the volcanoes around Quito (today the capital of Ecuador), almost reached the summit of Chimborazo (6,272 metres), described the remains of the Inca Empire, and stayed for a short time in the Amazon region, where he may have seen the swimming postman. Humboldt later reached the coast of the Pacific, where he discovered the famous cold oceanic current which was subsequently named after him.***

Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Paris

*Alexander von Humboldt and his friend and travelling companion, the French naturalist Aimé Bonpland (1773-1858), observe a shower of shooting stars on the coast of South America in 1799.*

THE inhabitants have a very singular way of using the lower reaches of the Rio Guancabamba, at the place where there are a great many waterfalls, in order to enable the area to communicate with the sea-coasts to the south. To speed on their way the few letters that are sent from Truxillo to the province of Jaén de Bracamoros, they use a swimming messenger. In two days, this unusual postman, who is as a rule a young Indian, swims down from Pomahuaca to Tomependa, following first the Rio Chamaya, the name given to the Rio Guancabamba in its lower reaches, and then the River Amazon. He carefully wraps the few letters that he must carry in a large piece of cotton cloth which he rolls like a turban around his head. When he reaches the waterfalls he swims ashore and enters the river again lower down, walking through the woods that shade its banks. In order to swim for so long without becoming exhausted, he often encircles one of his arms with a strip of very light wood *(ceyba, palo de balsa)* of the *Bombacaceae* family. Sometimes, too, he swims in company with one of his friends. Neither of them need worry about food and lodging, since they are sure to receive a hospitable welcome in the huts scattered among the splendid *huertas* of Pucara or Cavico, densely fringed with fruit trees.

The Rio Chamaya is not, fortunately, infested with crocodiles. In the Marañón itself, these animals do not travel further upstream than the Mayasi cataract; being indolent by nature, they prefer quieter waters. I have observed that from the ford or *paso* of Pucara to the point where the Rio Chamaya flows into the River Amazon, below the village of Choros (that is, over a distance not exceeding 22 leagues), there is a gradient of 542 metres. The governor of the province of Jaén de Bracamoros has assured me that the letters thus transported seldom get wet and are seldom lost. I myself, shortly after my return from Mexico to Paris, received a letter from Tomependa which had followed this route. It is the custom among many Indian communities living on the banks of the Marañón to travel in the same way, swimming downstream in a group. I once counted in the river the heads of thirty or forty men, women and children of the Xibaros tribe, just as they were arriving in Tomependa. The "swimming postman" returns on foot up the steep path of the *páramo del Paredón.* ■

# Merchants and adventurers

No trade without travel, and vice versa. In prehistoric times men and goods began to move along the trade routes which would in the course of time develop into great arteries for the diffusion of cultures and ways of life (see the *Unesco Courier,* June 1984). Unsuspected dangers sometimes lay in wait for intrepid merchants who set out for distant lands.

## Reflections on solitude

### *by Athanasius Nikitin*

***The travels of Athanasius Nikitin, a Russian merchant from the town of Tver (today Kalinin), lasted from 1466 until 1472, the year in which he died near Smolensk. After trading in the Turkish countries on the borders of the Caspian Sea and travelling through Iran, he lived for almost three years in India. Nikitin left a short account of his journeys, including a notable description of his experiences in the Bahmanī Kingdom of the Deccan Plateau where he lived for a time in the town of Bīdar, in which evocations of the landscape are mingled with practical information on food, prices and travel. His book is also a reflection on solitude: during his sojourn in Muslim and Hindu India, the Christian merchant felt that he was losing his identity.***

THE city of Bīdar is guarded at night by a thousand men under the fortress commander. They are mounted, wear armour and each of them carries a torch.

I sold my stallion in Bīdar. He had cost me sixty-eight *futun.* I had fed him for a year.

In Bīdar one can see snakes twelve feet long slithering through the streets.

I arrived in Bīdar from Kodangal for the feast of St. Philip, and I sold my stallion for Christmas. I remained in Bīdar until Lent. I made the acquaintance of many Indians there. I told them my religion—not Muslim but Isâ-dîni, Christian—and that my name was Athanasius but that my Muslim name was Khoja Yusuf Khorasani. They didn't try to hide from me, either to eat, to do business or for their *mana,* or for anything else. Likewise, they did not hide their women from me.

I asked them about their religion and they said, "We believe in Adam." According to them the *But* are Adam and all his descendants. Altogether there are eighty-four religions in India, and they all believe in the *But.* ...

In May, I celebrated Easter in the Muslim city of Bīdar .... The Muslims for their part celebrated Baghrâm on a Wednesday in May. I began the Lenten fast on the first day of April. Oh faithful Christians, he who travels much in many lands commits many sins and loses his Christian faith. And I, Athanasius, poor servant of God, have suffered greatly for my religion. Already four Lents have passed and four Easters, and I, a sinner, know neither Easter nor when Lent is, nor Christmas nor the other feasts. I know neither Wednesday nor Friday. I have no book. When they robbed me they took my books. Because of all these misfortunes I went to India, for I had nothing to take back to Russia, I had no goods left. In the first year, I celebrated Easter at Nâïn, in the second at Chapakur in Mazanderan, in the third at Hormuz and in the fourth at Bīdar in India, amongst the Muslims. And I wept much for the faith, the Christian faith.

Malik the Muslim strongly pressed me to adopt the Muslim faith. I said to him, "Sir, *tu namâz qïlar-sän, män dä namâz qïlar-män; tu bes namâz qïlar-siz, män dä 3 qïlar-män; män gharîb e sän în-jây* [you pray and I pray too. You say five prayers, I say three. I am a stranger; you are in your own country here]."

And he said, "In truth, you claim that you are not a Muslim, but you do not know the Christian religion."

Then I began to think a lot and I said to myself, "Woe to me, accursed. I have strayed far from the path of truth and do not know the way back! Here I am walking alone! O Lord my God, master of all things, creator of heaven and earth, do not turn your face away from your servant because I am indeed close to misfortune. Lord, behold me, have pity on me your creature. Do not let me stray from the way of truth. Put me O Lord on your right road since I have done nothing which could please you in this misfortune, O Lord, since I have spent all my days in evil. *Allâh perverdigâr Allâh kerîm Allâh rahîm Allâh kerîm Allâh rahîm Allâh ʿâlîm al ʿulamâ* [God the protector, generous God, merciful God, God the wisest of the wise]. I have spent four Easters in Muslim lands and have not renounced my Christian faith. Only God knows what will happen. Lord my God, I put my trust in thee. Save me, Lord my God." ■

Photo © APN, Moscow

*Still from* Journey Beyond Three Seas *(1958), a Soviet-Indian film by Vassili Pronin and Ahrmat Abhat based on Athanasius Nikitin's travel journal. Oleg Strijenov is seen in the role of the 15th-century Russian merchant and traveller.*

Photo Manso © Royal Fine Arts Academy, Madrid

The Burial of the Sardine, *painted around 1810 by the Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746-1828). This carnival scene is one of Goya's most powerful depictions of Spanish life.*

# Scholar Gypsy

## *by George Borrow*

***A tall, strapping Englishman "standing six foot two in his stockings", George Borrow (1803-1881) was, with his shock of white hair, a man of distinctive appearance. An accomplished horseman, knife-thrower and friend of the Gypsies whose language he spoke fluently, he bore more resemblance to a character in a novel than to the travelling salesman he became when the British and Foreign Bible Society, after sending him on a mission to Russia, commissioned him to distribute the Bible in the Iberian Peninsula.* The Bible in Spain *(1842), his account of this evangelical mission, is sub-titled "The Journeys, Adventures, and Imprisonments of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula". This story of Borrow's adventures, by turns amusing, dramatic and tragic, was an overwhelming success when it was published and is still as popular as ever. The incident he describes here takes place in Madrid.***

APROPOS of bull-fighters: Shortly after my arrival, I one day entered a low tavern in a neighbourhood notorious for robbery and murder, and in which for the last two hours I had been wandering on a voyage of discovery. I was fatigued, and required refreshment. I found the place thronged with people, who had all the appearance of ruffians. I saluted them, upon which they made way for me to the bar, taking off their sombreros with great ceremony. I emptied a glass of *val de peñas,* and was about to pay for it and depart, when a horrible-looking fellow, dressed in a buff jerkin, leather breeches, and jackboots, which came halfway up his thighs, and having on his head a white hat, the rims of which were at least a yard and a half in circumference, pushed through the crowd, and confronting me, roared—

*"Otra copita! vamos Inglesito: Otra copita!"* ["Another glass! Come on, little Englishman, another glass!"]

"Thank you, my good sir, you are very kind, you appear to know me, but I have not the honour of knowing you."

"Not know me!" replied the being. "I am Sevilla, the torero. I know you well; you are the friend of Baltasarito, the national, who is a friend of mine, and a very good subject."

Then turning to the company, he said in a sonorous tone, laying a strong emphasis on the last syllable of every word, according to the custom of the *gente rufianesca* [brigands] throughout Spain—

"Cavaliers, and strong men, this cavalier is the friend of a friend of mine. *Es mucho hombre.* [He's quite a man.] There is none like him in Spain. He speaks the crabbed Gitáno though he is an *Inglesito."*

"We do not believe it," replied several grave voices. "It is not possible."

"It is not possible, say you? I tell you it is. Come forward, Balseiro, you who have been in prison all your life, and are always boasting that you can speak the crabbed Gitáno, though I say you know nothing of it—come forward and speak to his worship in the crabbed Gitáno."

A low, slight, but active figure stepped forward. He was in his shirt sleeves, and wore a montero cap; his features were handsome, but they were those of a demon.

He spoke a few words in the broken gipsy slang of the prison, inquiring of me whether I had ever been in the condemned cell, and whether I knew what a Gitána* was?

*"Vamos Inglesito,"* shouted Sevilla, in a voice of thunder; "answer the *monro* [fellow] in the crabbed Gitáno."

I answered the robber, for such he was, and one, too, whose name will live for many a year in the ruffian histories of Madrid; I answered him in a speech of some length, in the dialect of the Estremenian gipsies.

"I believe it is the crabbed Gitáno," muttered Balseiro. "It is either that or English, for I understand not a word of it."

"Did I not say to you," cried the bull-fighter, "that you knew nothing of the crabbed Gitáno? But this *Inglesito* does. I understood all he said. *Vaya,* there is none like him for the crabbed Gitáno. He is a good *ginete,* [horseman] too; next to myself, there is none like him, only he rides with stirrup leathers too short. *Inglesito,* if you have need of money, I will lend you my purse. All I have is at your service, and that is not a little; I have just gained four thousand *chulés* by the lottery. Courage, Englishman! Another cup. I will pay all. I, Sevilla!"

And he clapped his hand repeatedly on his breast, reiterating, "I, Sevilla! I—"

■

* Twelve ounces of bread, small pound, as given in the prison. *(Borrow's note.)*

*The Bible in Spain,* Everyman's Library, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1969.

# The art of meeting others

The extracts in this section have been chosen to illustrate the give-and-take inherent in human encounters, rather than the destructive aspects of contacts between different civilizations. The following descriptions of three extraordinary experiences which happened at key moments in the history of the relations between peoples, are a celebration, imbued with a certain nostalgia, of human diversity.

## How I became Gustavus Vasa

### *by Olaudah Equiano*

***At the age of ten, Olaudah Equiano, born in 1745 in a village in what is now Nigeria, was captured and sold as a slave to a planter in the West Indies and worked there and aboard slave ships that plied the Atlantic. By the age of nineteen, he had saved enough money to buy his freedom. As a free man, he served as a merchant seaman and quartermaster and did a variety of other jobs. He visited the Mediterranean and took part in Phipps' expedition to the Arctic in 1773. Equiano was an ardent and active member of the Anti-Slavery movement and towards the end of his life was appointed Commissary of Stores on a ship carrying freed slaves to Sierra Leone. His autobiography, published in 1789, was famous in his time, and ran into some 12 editions in the United Kingdom and the United States between 1789 and 1827.***

SOME of the people of the ship used to tell me they were going to carry me back to my own country and this made me very happy. I was quite rejoiced at the sound of going back, and thought if I should get home what wonders I should have to tell. But I was reserved for another fate and was soon undeceived when we came within sight of the English coast. While I was on board this ship, my captain and master named me *Gustavus Vasa.* I at that time began to understand him a little, and refused to be called so, and told him as well as I could that I would be called Jacob; but he said I should not, and still called me Gustavus; and when I refused to answer to my new name, which at first I did, it gained me many a cuff; so at length I submitted and was obliged to bear the present name, by which I have been known ever since.

The ship had a very long passage, and on that account we had very short allowance of provisions. Towards the last we had only one pound and a half of bread per week, and about the same quantity of meat, and one quart of water a day. We spoke with only one vessel the whole time we were at sea, and but once we caught a few fishes. In our extremities the captain and people told me in jest they would kill and eat me, but I thought them in earnest and was depressed beyond measure, expecting every moment to be my last. While I was in this situation, one evening they caught, with a good deal of trouble, a large shark, and got it on board. This gladdened my poor heart exceedingly, as I thought it would serve the people to eat instead of their eating me; but very soon, to my astonishment, they cut off a small part of the tail and tossed the rest over the side. This renewed my consternation, and I did not know what to think of these white people, though I very much feared they would kill and eat me.

There was on board the ship a young lad who had never been at sea before, about four or five years older than myself: his name was Richard Baker. He was a native of America, had received an excellent education, and was of a most amiable temper. Soon after I went on board he showed me a great deal of partiality and attention and in return I grew extremely fond of him. We at length became inseparable, and for the space of two years he was of very great use to me and was my constant companion and instructor. Although this dear youth had many slaves of his own, yet he and I have gone through many sufferings together on shipboard, and we have many nights lain in each other's bosoms when we were in great distress. Thus such a friendship was cemented between us as we cherished till his death, which to my very great sorrow happened in the year 1759, when he was up the Archipelago on board his Majesty's ship the *Preston,* an event which I have never ceased to regret as I lost at once a kind interpreter, an agreeable companion, and a faithful friend; who, at the age of fifteen, discovered a mind superior to prejudice, and who was not ashamed to notice, to associate with, and to be the friend and instructor of one who was ignorant, a stranger, of a different complexion, and a slave! ■

*Olaudah Equiano as portrayed on the frontispiece of the first edition of his autobiography,* The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African. Written by Himself *(1789).*

Photo © Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London and Ibadan

*Equiano's Travels,* edited by Paul Edwards. Heinemann Educational Books, London and Ibadan, 1967.

# Long nose, white skin and 'honey mouth'

*by Mungo Park*

***In 1795, a young Scots surgeon named Mungo Park was commissioned by the African Association of London to explore the true course of the Niger. As he advanced into the interior of Africa he discovered a continent comprising many busy, sovereign States engaged in trade. In his account of his travels, a unique description of the west African slave trade and an outstanding ethnographic document, Mungo Park brings back to life the vanished world of the upper Gambia river. Uncompromisingly written, free from exoticism, his book presents a series of encounters made by a traveller of outstanding human qualities.***

Photo © H. Roger Viollet, Paris

*Portrait of the Scottish explorer Mungo Park (1771-1805). In 1798 he published* Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa Performed Under the Direction and Patronage of the African Association in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 by Mungo Park, Surgeon.

WHEN we came to the entrance of the court in which the king resides, both my guide and interpreter, according to custom, took off their sandals; and the former pronounced the king's name aloud, repeating it till he was answered from within. We found the monarch sitting upon a mat, and two attendants with him. I repeated what I had before told him concerning the object of my journey, and my reasons for passing through his country. He seemed, however, but half satisfied. The notion of travelling for curiosity was quite new to him. He thought it impossible, he said, that any man in his senses would undertake so dangerous a journey, merely to look at the country and its inhabitants; however, when I offered to show him the contents of my portmanteau, and everything belonging to me, he was convinced; and it was evident that his suspicion had arisen from a belief that every white man must of necessity be a trader. When I had delivered my presents, he seemed well pleased, and was particularly delighted with the umbrella, which he repeatedly furled and unfurled, to the great admiration of himself and his two attendants, who could not for some time comprehend the use of this wonderful machine. After this I was about to take my leave, when the king, desiring me to stop awhile, began a long preamble in favour of the whites, extolling their immense wealth and good dispositions. He next proceeded to an eulogium on my blue coat, of which the yellow buttons seemed particularly to catch his fancy; and he concluded by entreating me to present him with it; assuring me, for my consolation under the loss of it, that he would wear it on all public occasions, and inform every one who saw it of my great liberality towards him. The request of an African prince, in his own dominions, particularly when made to a stranger, comes little short of a command. It is only a way of obtaining by gentle means what he can, if he pleases, take by force; and, as it was against my interest to offend him by a refusal, I very quietly took off my coat, the only good one in my possession, and laid it at his feet.

In return for my compliance, he presented me with great plenty of provisions, and desired to see me again in the morning. I accordingly attended, and found him sitting upon his bed. He told me he was sick, and wished to have a little blood taken from him; but I had no sooner tied up his arm, and displayed the lancet, than his courage failed, and he begged me to postpone the operation till the afternoon, as he felt himself, he said, much better than he had been, and thanked me kindly for my readiness to serve him. He then observed that his women were very desirous to see me, and requested that I would favour them with a visit. ... They were ten or twelve in number, most of them young and handsome, and wearing on their heads ornaments of gold, and beads of amber.

They rallied me with a good deal of gaiety on different subjects, particularly upon the whiteness of my skin, and the prominency of my nose. They insisted that both were artificial. The first, they said, was produced when I was an infant, by dipping me in milk; and they insisted that my nose had been pinched every day till it had acquired its present unsightly and unnatural conformation. On my part, without disputing my own deformity, I paid them many compliments on African beauty. I praised the glossy jet of their skins, and the lovely depression of their noses; but they said that flattery, or (as they emphatically termed it) "honey mouth", was not esteemed in Bondou. In return, however, for my company or my compliments (to which, by the way, they seemed not so insensible as they affected to be), they presented me with a jar of honey and some fish, which were sent to my lodging, and I was desired to come again to the king a little before sunset.

I carried with me some beads and writing paper, it being usual to present some

**Continued page 23**

## Colour pages

### Opposite page

The Cathedral of Mexico City, *illumination from the* Tarikh-i Yeni Dunya *("History of the New World") by 'Ali Chelebi (Iran, second half of 17th century). Eastern and Western features are mingled in this original composite image. At left of tree, possibly a guava, stands a church with a roof shaped like an Aztec step-pyramid. Inside sits a venerable greybearded patriarch who supports himself by means of an Indian meditation band. Outside two figures dressed in Mughal costume carry a man kneeling in prayer, an image which recalls the wooden statues of Catholic saints borne in religious processions. Above is a group of figures in partial European costume, intended to be conquistadors.*

Photo © Chester Beatty, Dublin

### Centre pages

*Clockwise, starting from bottom left: (1) Two officers from the expedition led by the French navigator La Pérouse (1741-1788), measure the giant stone statues of Easter Island (Chile), on 9 April 1786. This engraving (c. 1820) is based on a drawing by Duché de Vancy. (2) Watercolour of Guang Zhou Street, Canton, southern China, painted in 1863 by the German artist Eduard Hildebrandt (1818-1869). (3) Map from a 13th-century Maghreb manuscript of the* Kitāb nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq *("The Pleasure Excursion of One Who is Eager to Traverse the Regions of the World") by the Arab geographer al-Idrīsī (1100-c.1165). This great descriptive work divides the known world into seven climatic zones. Map shown here represents the 6th part of the 4th zone. In accordance with a convention of early Arab cartography, the south is at top of map. The River Tigris and its tributaries are at bottom right. In bottom left corner, part of the Caspian Sea. (4) Mural executed in 1986 at Jacmel (Haiti) commemorating the arrival of Columbus in America. (5) Camel caravan in the Malian desert.*

(1)Photo © Rojas Mix, Paris. (2) Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Paris. Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. (3) Photo © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. (4) Photo © George Buxin, Paris. (5) Photo M. Huet © Hoa-Qui, Paris.

### Page 22

**Above:** *Saturn and its rings photographed on 3 November 1980 by the American interplanetary probe Voyager 1, from a distance of 13 million kilometres. Two of the planet's moons can be seen: Tethys (below) and Dione.* **Below:** Paysage exotique *("Exotic Landscape", 1908), by the French painter Henri "Le Douanier" Rousseau (1844-1910), shows a jungle jungle landscape transformed by the artist's imagination.*

Photo © Collection PPP/NASA Photo © Artephot/Lavaud

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المشرق
حلوان

الجزء السادس من الاقليم الرابع
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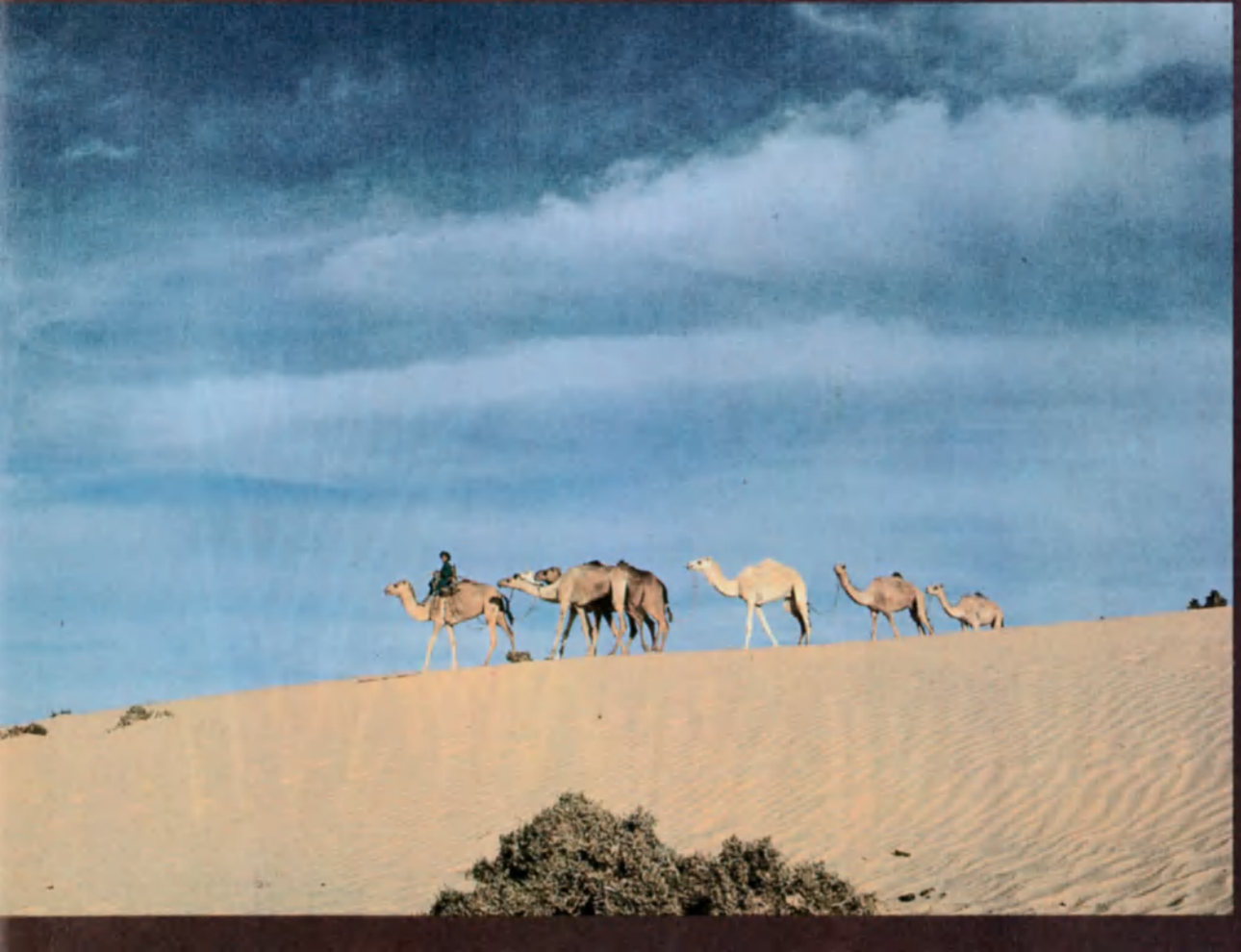

Continued from page 18

small offering on taking leave, in return for which the king gave me five drachms of gold, observing that it was but a trifle, and given out of pure friendship, but would be of use to me in travelling for the purchase of provision. He seconded this act of kindness by one still greater, politely telling me, that though it was customary to examine the baggage of every traveller passing through his country, yet, in the present instance, he would dispense with that ceremony; adding, I was at liberty to depart when I pleased. ■

*Travels into the Interior of Africa.* Eland Books, London, 1983.

# Island fling

## *by Victor Segalen*

***In 1903 and 1904, the French writer Victor Segalen (1878-1919), a surgeon aboard the Tahiti-based sloop* la Durance, *sailed the length and breadth of Polynesia. He was immediately aware of the drama then being enacted in the islands: the slow disappearance of the traditional Maori civilization. He set out to collect the surviving evidence of this civilization about which he wrote a masterpiece,* Les immémoriaux, *published in 1907 under the pseudonym of Max Anély. He also returned from his voyage with the draft of an "essay on exoticism". In his denunciation of the tragedy of a people being deprived of its myths and language, Segalen draws attention to the fatal inner destruction which the clash of two civilizations can bring about.***

THAT an impression of the "exotic" is relative stands in no further need of proof. It is the effect of a mere spatial shift, distance, or, when distance is abolished, the surprise of the first few moments. Here I am, now living quite naturally in "faraway places", moving easily and without curiosity among the same old customs. ... Now, it is the thought of returning to Old Europe that seems like a mirage. ...

Consider me, yesterday morning, on the track which follows the circumference of the island, riding in an American buggy harnessed to a rather frisky horse, with Le Morne as the hub around which we turn. The endless reef, the calm sea, the rustling of dry leaves that the land-crabs haul laboriously into their holes ... there is Faa-Nui, the great valley, the priestly name of Bora Bora itself.

Towards evening comes the beat of the drum, the conscientious summons to the *Upa-Upa,* but it is not taken up. Cheerless couples pass by. A mere four dancers, including the fine figure of Terii Farani. Night falls. The drum throbs in a frenzy, played by an old blind man whose only joy in life is drumming.

The man's whole being is rhythm. His shoulders shake and follow the movements of the dance with great precision. He works up to emotional crescendos. He is cajoling people to dance. The dejected couples look on indifferently. Half-heartedly, they form a ring. And now here is Terii Farani, in a white tapa, crowned with large white flowers, her slightly hooked nose with its fine curve, her flashing eyes, her delicately shaped and attractive mouth, and her proud stance—and she decides to take the lead. Her feet mark time with quick, tiny steps. Her hips sway beneath her steadily motionless torso. Her arms undulate and swing; her hands, from time to time, vibrate. Before she is drunk—for later we shall give her ample opportunity—this woman is truly beautiful. Then, in the arms of a *tane,* with her hand on his broad shoulder and the other clasping his equally broad hand, in the very pose of our European waltz, she mimics our feeble little dances, our fragile porcelain polkas, and gives them her beautiful gestures and attitudes, and all the "grandiose grace" of her race.

And I think how very ridiculous a Frenchwoman would look if, spontaneously, without any practice beforehand, she tried to imitate some native dance step!—This woman has a pure beauty.

The few lights go out and the old drum slackens its pace. The great grass-fringed lawn darkens to black, and the night swallows the *fare-himene,* the *fare-puera* and the school, three great edifices, the last two of which have proved lethal to the country. We are doing much to force "civilization" into retreat, and doing it cheerfully! In disobedience to official orders and moral injunctions, a few gallons of strong rum have been brought ashore, together with plentiful supplies of wine. We go indoors, and encourage the dancers and musicians to drink. And these dignified women get drunk as if they were performing a duty, promptly, draining at a draught each glass as it is held out to them, until their eyes turn up in their sockets and their lips grow thick. ... The company includes the very young Tanahoa, a nice fellow, who asks for "perfumes" and offers his relative in exchange; and there is Atu, the relative in question, tall and gentle, with such kind eyes, and Hina (the Moon-child), nearly auburn and wilder, and then Rereao, slighter and livelier; and finally, Terii Farani, who complicates her dances with new steps, inspired by alcohol, who nevertheless holds her graceful posture, and who, above all, is prudent enough to withdraw from the scene before her inevitable collapse.

The honest schoolteacher, who leads a devout and upright life and sings in church, must be losing sleep, in his *fare* almost next door! ■

*Journal des îles,* Les Editions du Pacifique, Papeete (Tahiti), 1978.

Photo © A. Joly-Segalen, Paris

*An illustrated page from the journal of Victor Segalen (1878-1919), dated 1 January 1904 at Mangareva, the largest of the Gambier Islands (French Polynesia).*

# Pilgrims and missionaries

The pilgrim is a universal figure. Between the 4th and the 11th century, Chinese Buddhist pilgrims often made their way to India by land or sea, and several of them wrote exciting accounts of their "journey to the West". The missionary is a more typically Western figure. From the 16th century on, many Christian evangelists set out from Europe to preach in the Far East. Some of them were great travellers.

## How Buddhism came to Karnasuvarna

### *by Xuan Zang*

***The most famous Chinese pilgrim who visited India was Xuan Zang (602-664), a Buddhist monk with encyclopaedic religious knowledge. Unhappy about the doctrinal errors and divergences he had noted in the Chinese versions of the sacred Buddhist scriptures, he decided to go to India in search of the original texts and to study with Indian masters. After a stay lasting several years, he returned to China with over 600 works, relics and souvenirs. He spent the rest of his life translating philosophical texts and teaching. His* Ta-T'ang Hsi-yü-chi *("Records of the Western Regions of the Great T'ang Dynasty") describes his journey.***

Drawing by Zeng Zhao'an and Liu Jikun © Foreign Language Publishing House, Beijing, China

*Illustration from* Sun Wukong becomes a Buddhist *(1984), a Chinese book of children's stories adapted from* Xiyou ji (The Monkey King *or* Pilgrimage to the West), *an epic novel based on Xuan Zang's journey to India. The Monkey King, Sun Wukong, protects Xuan Zang (on horseback) from a tiger.*

KARNASUVARNA was 4,400 or 4,500 *li* in circumference and its capital was over 20 *li* in circumference. It was a prosperous state with a large population. Its land was low and moist and farming operations there were conducted regularly in accordance with the seasons. Everywhere in the state, there were blooming flowers and trees laden with rare fruits. The climate was temperate and the people were of good character. They were patrons of learning and believed in both Buddhism and other religions. There were more than ten Buddhist monasteries and over two thousand Brethren who were all adherents of the Sammatiya School. There were also fifty Deva-Temples and the followers of the various religions were very numerous. There were another three Buddhist monasteries where the Brethren did not eat milk products in accordance with the teaching of Devadatta.

Near the capital was the Luoduoweizhi Monastery (or Red Mud Monastery in the language of the T'ang Dynasty). With its spacious rooms and courtyards and lofty pavilions and platforms, it was a magnificent and famous establishment, the resort of illustrious Brethren and scholars from throughout the state. They gathered there to exchange ideas and discuss theories and philosophies.

In earlier years, no one in the state believed in Buddhism. Once, a person of another religion from South India strutted into the capital with a walking stick in his hand, with his stomach girded by a copper sheathing and bearing on his head a light.

Someone asked this person: "Why are you putting such odd things around your stomach and on your head?"

The man answered: "I have too much learning and my stomach would burst out (if not protected by the copper sheathing) and I pity those stupid and ignorant masses, so I bear a light on my head to enlighten them."

He was beating a drum and challenging anyone to debate with him. Ten days went by, and no one dared to ask the man any questions. Even a search through all the elites in the state proved vain.

The King said: "Why is it that we can't find a wise and illustrious person in the whole state? It's a galling shame that when a guest here asks a question, no one in the state can answer it. Try again among those hermits."

Then someone came forward and told the King: "There is a stranger in the forest who calls himself Sramana. He has been living in solitude for a long time and devoting himself to study. If he is not a learned and highly moral person, how could he behave in this way?"

After hearing the story, the King himself went to the forest to invite the stranger to take part in the debate.

Sramana told the King: "I am from South India and staying here as a guest. I do not have much learning and probably cannot live up to your expectations. I am grateful for your invitation and cannot persist in declining it. If I win the debate, I wish you would found a Buddhist monastery and invite the Brethren to spread the doctrines of Buddhism."

The King answered: "I promise and we will never forget your great kindness."

Sramana accepted the King's invitation and went to meet the braggart. The latter made a speech of more than 30,000 words on the doctrines of his religion. The speech, imbued with profound meaning and a wide range of knowledge, touched on almost everything under the sun, from theories created by famous persons to his own experiences.

However, after listening to the speech no more than a moment, Sramana saw all the meaning in it. He used only a few hundred words in his reply and interpretation, making not a single mistake, and then asked some hard questions about his opponent's doctrines. The braggart realized that he had been defeated in the argument, and fell silent. He was totally discredited and retreated in disgrace. The King deeply respected the talent of Sramana and founded the Luoduoweizhi Monastery to begin spreading the doctrines of Buddhism. ■

# A visit to the regent of Tibet

## *by Régis-Evariste Huc*

***In 1846, the Lazarist missionary Régis-Evariste Huc (1814-1860) became the first Frenchman to enter Tibet. Determined, adaptable and with a passion for discovery, Huc successfully overcame the many obstacles he encountered during his travels in Mongolia, Tibet and China. The story of his experiences, in which Huc shows himself to be a remarkable explorer and ethnologist, is today a classic. Commissioned to take Christianity to "Tartary" (Mongolia), Huc realized that if he was to convert the people to Christianity he would first have to study Buddhism. He reached the capital of Tibet, the holy city of Lhasa, after eight months of perilous wandering accompanied by a young converted lama named Samdadchiemba, a camel, a white horse, and a dog named Arsalan.***

WE had reached the dessert, in other words, we were rinsing out our bowls with buttered tea when the two Lamas, so-called merchants, reappeared. "The regent," they said, "is waiting for you at his palace. He wants to speak to you."...

There was no longer any doubt about our situation. The Government intended to take an interest in us. But for what purpose? Was it to do us good or to do us ill? To free us or to keep us prisoner? To let us live or to have us killed? "Let us go and see the regent," we said to ourselves, "and for the rest, God's will be done!"

Having put on our finest gowns and our imposing fox-fur bonnets, we said to an attendant, "Let us go!"

"What about this young man?" he asked, pointing to Samdadchiemba, who turned his eyes upon him in a most unfriendly way.

"This young man? He is our servant. He will look after the house during our absence."

"It's not that. He must come too. The regent wants to see all three of you."

By way of toilet, Samdadchiemba shook his great sheepskin gown, tilted a little black fur hat over his ear in a very cocky fashion and, after padlocking the door of our dwelling, we all set forth together.

After charging along for five or six minutes we came to the palace of the first Kalon, regent of Tibet. We crossed a large courtyard where many Lamas and Chinese were gathered. When they saw us appear they began to whisper. We were made to stop in front of a gilded double door whose leaves were ajar. The master of ceremonies went along a small corridor on the left and almost at once the door opened. At the end of a simply decorated room we saw a figure seated cross-legged on a thick cushion covered with a tiger-skin. It was the regent.

As soon as we were seated, the regent began to contemplate us at length in silence and with keen interest. He bent his head, now to the right, now to the left, and smiled at us with a mixture of mockery and benevolence. Finally we found this kind of pantomime so funny that we could no longer refrain from laughing.

"Good!" we said to ourselves in French, in a low voice, "this gentleman seems to be good-natured enough. Our case will succeed."

"Ah," said the regent, in a voice full of affability. "What language are you speaking? I did not understand what you said."

"We are speaking the language of our country."

"Come, repeat aloud what you have just whispered."

"We were saying: this gentleman seems to be good-natured enough."

"Do you understand this language?" he asked, turning to those standing behind him. They all bowed together and said they did not.

"You see, no one here understands the language of your country. Translate your words into Tibetan."

"We were saying that there was much kindness in the face of the first Kalon."

"Ah, so you think I am kind? But I am very cruel. Is it not true that I am very cruel?" said he, turning to his followers. They began to smile but did not reply. "You are right," the regent continued. "I am kind, for kindness is the duty of a Kalon. I must be kind to my people and also to strangers." Then he made us a long speech of which we understood very little.

When he had finished we told him that, not being sufficiently familiar with the Tibetan language, we had not fully understood what he had said. The regent beckoned to a Chinese, who stepped forward and translated his speech, which can be summarized as follows: we had been summoned without the slightest intention of molesting us. Because of the conflicting rumours which had been circulating about us since our arrival in Lha-Ssa, the regent had decided to question us himself in order to find out where we came from. "We are from the West," we told the regent. "From Calcutta?" "No, our country is called France." "You are perhaps from *Peling?*" "No, we are French." "Can you write?" "Better than we can speak."

The regent turned away and spoke briefly to a Lama, who disappeared and returned a moment later with paper, ink and a bamboo stylus.

"Here is some paper," the regent said to us. "Write something."

"In which language? In Tibetan?"

"No, write some characters of your country's language."

One of us took the paper on his knees and wrote the following sentence: *What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul?*

"Ah, so these are the characters of your country! I have never seen anything like them. And what is the meaning of that?" We wrote the translation in Tibetan, Tartar and Chinese and had it handed to him. "I was not deceived," he said. "You are men of great learning. You can write in all tongues and the thoughts you express are as profound as those to be found in the books of prayer." Then, shaking his head slowly, he repeated: *"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul?"* ■

Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Archives des Missions Lazaristes, Paris

*Father Régis-Evariste Huc in Chinese dress.*

*Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet, pendant les années 1844, 1845 et 1846, par M. Huc, ancien missionaire apostolique*, edited by Gaume Frères et J. Duprey, Paris, 1868.

# The spiritual journey

Whether a visit from this world to the great beyond or the progress of a soul in search of the divine, the spiritual journey has been described in many books of wisdom from both East and West, from the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead* to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa at-tanbīhāt* ("Book of Directives and Remarks") by Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) which describe the mystic's spiritual journey to a direct and uninterrupted vision of God. In modern literature, the theme of the "inner journey" has reappeared, notably in mystical writings and in poetry.

## The mystic way

### *by Farīd oddīn 'Attār*

***Farīd oddīn 'Attār (d. c. 1220) is one of the most celebrated Persian Sūfī poets and mystics. In the West his best-known work is the* Manteq ot-teyr (The Conference of the Birds), *an allegorical poem describing the quest of 30 birds* (sī morgh) *for the Sīmorgh, or Divine Bird. This poem has been a constant source of inspiration for mystic poets. But 'Attār's masterpiece is doubtless the* Mosībat-nāmeh *("Book of Affliction"), which describes the quest of the soul, embodied by the Pilgrim, for unity. The passage published here is taken from the beginning of the poem, at the moment when the path to God is revealed to the Pilgrim. Each stage of the inner journey on which he embarks is punctuated with anecdotes rich in spiritual meaning.***

DISTRAUGHT and dumbfounded, the pilgrim saw a hundred universes, oceans upon oceans of seething waters, each in search of God, all of them engulfed in the vortex of God. A hundred thousand times he sifted all the earth, and cast aside intelligence, doubt and aporia. A hundred thousand times he sifted the earth of the world and as many times he laid upon the bench the pearl he had won. At last, success came to him from God. As he was sifting, a wise man came to him, a sun illuminating both worlds, gathering in myriads of stars on the Way, in the world and out of it, in the centre and out of it; settled, and forever travelling; invisible, and forever present; sun flooding the two worlds with light, and frightened by his own brilliance; red flame on the Way, vast heart like the green ocean. Let him perish who makes no khôl with the dust of his steps, be he pure or impure! Ah, son, the road is long and full of pitfalls, the traveller must have a guide. How can the blind man find his way without a stick? There is no Wise One, thou sayest? Ask, seek desperately! If there was not in the world a single Wise One, the earth would rise up and time would stop.

In short, when the Pilgrim met the Wise One, the guide on the Way, he bowed low before him. His heart overflowed with joy. With all his heart, he fixed the ring of servitude to his ear. A hundred thousand rosebuds blossomed in the garden of his heart. Grace brought him ecstasy, impiety fled, the way opened.

The Wise One said to him:

"Brigands lurk on the Way. Sleep not, do what you have been told. The road is long. Son, watch out! Let sleep await the tomb, keep watch! To each a task has been assigned. Many have suffered such distress. On this long road beware of being hindered by trifles. Wherever you halt you will remain prostrate for ever. May heartbreaks and burnings in your breast be calls. May this echo of the Qur'an sing in your soul like the nightingale's song! Walk upright, do your best, be vigilant. Carry the burden, eat the thorn, keep your ears wide open!"

The Pilgrim became inflamed like a lover seized with passion. He threw off melancholy and rapture and plunged naked into the ocean. He laid complaint and gratitude aside, and set out along the endless Way. ■

Photo © Roland and Sabrina Michaud, Paris. Lahore Museum, Pakistan

*A meditating Sūfī portrayed in a 15th-century Persian miniature (Shīrāz school). Sūfism consists of a variety of ascetic rules and mystical paths followed by Muslim orders and brotherhoods. One of the saints of Sūfism is Jalāl ad-Dīn ar-Rūmī (1207-1274), founder of the Mawlawīyah order of Sūfis better known in the West as the "whirling dervishes" because of the dance their founder prescribed for them.*

# Men of letters

In the 19th and early 20th century scholarly writers, diplomats and statesmen from all over the world visited Europe for the first time. Under their penetrating scrutiny, European life and institutions sometimes appear in an unexpected light. Of particular interest as a source of information about both observers and observed are the reflections of travellers from countries such as China and, especially, Japan, which were then largely inaccessible to the West.

Photo © Kharbine-Tapabor, Paris

*The Japanese official mission which visited Europe in 1862. Fukuzawa Yukichi, the interpreter, is standing second from right.*

## Diplomats under surveillance

*by Fukuzawa Yukichi*

***In 1862, a Japanese official mission visited several European capitals: London, The Hague, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Paris (twice). The young interpreter who accompanied them was Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), who in his* Autobiography *described the trip, which took place at the time of the Meiji Restoration when the Japanese government wished to bring the country out of its isolation. In 1866, Fukuzawa published* Seiyō jijō *("Conditions in the West"), a major work which made him the most important writer of the new Japan. He later wrote many popular educational works in which he explained Western culture to the Japanese public, and was a dedicated educator whose school, "Keiō Gijuku", was granted university status in 1903.***

THERE were about forty of us altogether, all in Japanese dress, and we must have been a curious sight walking around London and Paris with two swords hanging at our side. Before we left Japan we were told that we would have the greatest difficulty in getting supplies abroad. So we were provided with several hundred boxes of white rice for the journey, and to light the corridors in inns at night we were given dozens of specially made "metal lanterns"—lanterns with two square legs, surrounded by mesh—plus a whole assortment of portable lanterns, candelabra, standing lanterns and candles. In short, what was loaded onto the ship was doubtless intended to correspond to what a *daimyô* and his retinue would need in the coaching inns of the Tôkaidô.

On our arrival in Paris, and after the customary salutations, the first request made to the official who received us was that the accommodation of the attendants should not be too far away from the residence of the heads of mission, which meant that the latter did not feel very secure and intended to keep their escort close at hand. Our host immediately agreed and asked how many of us there were. When he learned that there were some thirty of us he replied that if there were not more of us than that, ten or twenty groups like ours could be put up in a single hotel. This reply left us flabbergasted. Whereupon we were conducted to the hotel where we were to stay. This was the Hôtel du Louvre, at the very gates of the Palace, an imposing five-storey building containing no less than six hundred rooms and with a staff of over five hundred. It could easily accommodate a thousand guests, so that the Japanese mission passed unnoticed there and our sole concern was not to get lost in the corridors. Warm air circulated in the rooms, where neither stove nor radiator was to be seen. Rooms and corridors were lighted by countless gaslamps and one hardly noticed the coming of night. Every

kind of food from the seas and mountains was available in the dining room to satisfy our appetites, and the worst detractors of the barbarous West forgot their prejudices while enjoying these exquisite dishes. So we were hampered by all this baggage that we had been dragging around with us since we had left Japan. Obviously there was no question of lighting our lanterns in the hotel corridors or of cooking our rice in the kitchens. We ended up therefore by presenting all our material, starting with the rice, to one of the minor officials in the reception committee, a man named Lambert, and we considered ourselves fortunate that he deigned to accept it.

Our ignorance of local customs caused us not a few difficulties over which we had many a good laugh. A waiter whom we sent out for tobacco understood "sugar" for "cigar", and brought us sugar. Our doctor thought he had bought ginseng, which turned out to be powdered ginger.

At that time Japan was a closed world, and there was something laughable about the precautions taken to prevent our meeting foreigners, even though we were in a foreign country. The three emissaries were Takenushi, Matsudaira and Kyogoku. The last-named was responsible for our surveillance and he had several specially trained agents for this purpose. Since these kept a constant eye on their companions, it was very difficult to meet foreigners. We were all Bakufu officials but there were three of us who thought alike and pursued the same objective—Mitsukui Shûbei, Matsuki Kôan and myself. We had been students together and already at that time were inseparable, trying to see everything that was to be seen. Our good agents did not seem to appreciate this overmuch, especially since all three of us were of inferior rank and, what was worse, read Western books—a fact which prompted them to be on their guard. The orders were, therefore, that whenever we wanted to go out we had to take one of the agents with us, who followed us everywhere. Nevertheless, we had no treasonable intentions and there was no reason to fear that we would betray any State secrets! To be always followed by an agent of strange appearance was, therefore, simply annoying. This was bad enough, but when our henchman had something else to do we could not go out either! This was a great nuisance. On such occasions I would say to my friends, "Pooh, it's nothing! It's as though we were doing the tour of Europe bringing our tightly closed Japan along with us!" This made us all laugh. ■

# Vive la différence!

## *by Yuan Zuzhi*

***A member of an illustrious family of Chinese literati, Yuan Zuzhi (1827-1898) visited Europe in 1883 in the entourage of a group of Chinese politicians, and some time later published a brief guide containing useful information for travellers to Western Europe. The extract published here is taken from a long comparison between Chinese and European civilization which Yuan Zuzhi wrote in the mid-1880s. Not without humour, he seeks to reveal the good points of Chinese civilization.***

'WESTERN customs are not without similarities to those of China, and if at times they diverge a little, it is not surprising in view of the tens of thousands of *li* which separate these two regions of the world. But they can be in complete contrast, a few examples of which follow: in China, the place of honour is on the left, in the West it is on the right. Men are held in higher regard than women on Chinese soil; in the West it is the other way round.

"On Chinese soil, doors and windows are left wide open; in the West, doors and gateways are there to be closed. In China, people find it more comfortable to change out of their formal clothes before sitting down to table, while in the West it is impossible to attend a banquet without dressing for the occasion. It is the same in the home. In China, the role of women is to serve and care for others; in the West, it is they who give the orders: the husband obeys.

"In China, a man's place is out of doors, a woman's, inside the house: what is said indoors never goes beyond the walls of the inner apartments; what is said outside does not enter the home. This is why a woman who stays at home and never goes out is highly regarded for her fine virtue. In the West, the women think of nothing but going out; the streets are full of their skirts and their jewellery. They mingle with passers-by and travellers. The husband has no right to stop his wife from going out; if he does so, he risks being prosecuted and thrown into prison. In China, people of the opposite sex must not touch one another while handing something over; in the West, when a man and woman shake hands it is only an expression of respect.

"In China, we consider it obscene to kiss with the lips; in the West, a close embrace and a kiss on the mouth is a gesture of politeness and of respect. ...

"In China, drinking cold water is advised against in order to avoid stomach-ache, while in the West it is a way of dealing with the heat. In China, wine is warmed before drinking; in the West, it is only drunk chilled. In China the main dishes are served first and the soup comes afterwards; in the West the soup is the first course. ... In China, the eating of beef is avoided because that animal is

essential for work. In the West, the horse is used for work and the ox is only for eating.

"In China, women dress to protect their bodies; they would feel the greatest shame if they exposed any part of themselves. In the West they uncover their shoulders and their breast, but do not allow their underwear to be seen. ...

"In China people do not talk while they are eating; gossips are made fun of. In the West, people think you are ill if you do not talk during a meal. ...

"In China, young people do not let their beards or side whiskers grow; it is only when they reach maturity that they give up shaving. In the West, it is the other way round.

"The Chinese could never have hair on their faces; Westerners' faces are covered with hair.

"In China, it would be impolite to appear bare-headed; on the contrary, people's headwear is chosen to fit the occasion; in the West, it is considered correct to take off one's hat. ...

"The Chinese bend their fingers to count on them, while Westerners straighten them out. ...

"The Chinese peel vegetables or fruit with the knife-blade facing away from them; in the West, it is turned inwards. ...

"In China, when the head of the household has people to dinner, the mistress retires and does not meet the guests. In the West, she must not only keep them company, but shake the hand of the guest of honour and take his arm on sitting down and on leaving the table.

"In China, when people meet, they normally ask one another's name before talking about the weather. In the West, people plunge into conversation without troubling about such niceties, and only exchange visiting cards if the talk naturally leads them to do so.

*At the height of fashion: a French lady of 1910 and a Chinese lady of 1930.*

Photo © H. Roger Viollet, Paris

Photo © Boyer-Viollet, Paris

"In China, the upper floors of a house are the most respectable, contrary to practice in the West, where the servants usually live on the fourth or fifth floors.

"In China, women's hair is admired for its sheen, for the subtle way in which it is groomed, and for its blackness. In the West, people like curly or wavy hair worn loose, and a deep yellow shade. Chinese ladies pride themselves on letting their nails grow long and pointed; Western ladies take pains to trim theirs and think their nails beautiful when they are rounded like the end of a mallet.

"In China, white is the colour of mourning and red that of marriage and joy. In the West, white stands for joy, while black is the colour of mourning. In China, the hands and face are washed after a meal; in the West, before.

"In China, black is worn to do dirty jobs, in the West, it is the colour of formal dress.

"Chinese women would feel humiliated and insulted to be watched and appraised. In the West, women are flattered to be observed and inspected by all and sundry and take this as a compliment.

"The Chinese court prides itself on endeavouring to reduce taxes and lighten duties, while in the West people unhesitatingly accept arbitrary taxation and exorbitant impositions. In China, rich families fill their stores and attics, while in the West the wealthy invest their money outside.

"In China, women but not men are repelled by the idea of showing their naked bodies; in the West, the opposite is the case.

"The listing of these contrasts could go on indefinitely ..." ■

*Nouvelles lettres édifiantes et curieuses d'Extrême-Occident par des voyageurs lettrés chinois à la Belle Epoque*, Editions Seghers, Paris, 1986.

Photo © de Selva-Tapabor, Paris

*The Mabille, a fashionable Parisian dance-hall of the mid-19th century, as shown in an engraving of 1867.*

# Dance-floor democracy

## *by Domingo F. Sarmiento*

***Outspoken writer, tireless educator and statesman, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) became President of the Argentine Republic in 1868. He is the author of a masterpiece of Spanish-American literature,* Facundo *(1845), an impassioned denunciation of dictatorship in which he analysed what he saw as a conflict in his country between "civilization and barbarism". In 1846 he was sent on an official mission to study educational methods in Europe, returning with material for a voluminous report* On the Education of the People, *and a lively account of his travels* (Viajes), *which was published in 1849. Sarmiento's reflections on equality inspired by his visits to Parisian dance-halls assume fuller significance in the light of his decision to live in exile in Chile rather than under the dictatorship of Juan Manuel Rosas in Argentina.***

THESE profound reflections made me think of the public dances of Paris, which I attend from time to time as a distraction from the torments of homesickness. I have neither the time, the inclination nor the means to lose myself in these delightful frivolities, the enjoyment of which I envy in others. Ah, if I only had forty thousand pesos, what a year I would give myself in Paris! With what memories I would brighten up my old age! But I am sensible, and content myself with observing, rather than scrounging from others as some people do.

The Paris dance-halls are public buildings rather like the theatres which they attempt to outdo in sumptuousness, brilliance and style. The *Rannelag* [Ranelagh] is comparable to the Italian operas as regards the quality of its patrons. There I have come across Balzac, George Sand, Soulié and other leading literary figures. The *Château-Rouge* is illuminated, at the end of each month, by eighty thousand lamps; the *Bal Maville* [Bal Mabille] attracts the most famous dancers; the *Chaumière,* paradise of Latin Quarter students, is a fortress at the entrance to which even the policeman must leave his sword. Every other day these public dance-halls open their doors to their thousands of customers. The men pay an entrance fee—on some days three francs, on others two, one franc fifty centimes on a Monday and five francs at the end of the month, for the *Grand Festival.* The ladies, who are always allowed in for nothing, come from all social strata, behaving with more or less familiarity depending on the day of the week and on their relationship with the men who pay—either one franc fifty centimes or five francs, according to their means. Very well-bred ladies go there to watch, and young women of all classes are regular and passionate fans of one dance-hall or another. The premises are decorated with exquisite taste: vases and statues tower over masses of foliage and platforms of rare, sweet-smelling flowers, and by the fiery light of the gaslamps, in asphalted avenues beneath swaying, multi-coloured Chinese lanterns, quadrilles of two hundred couples execute frenetic polkas and feverish waltzes. Here reputations are made, as important and European as that of a Dumas or a Rachel. When La Rigolette stands up with her companion (who is not Jerman), the whole company points her out, and the crowd of spectators throng around her. English lords, Russian boyars and princes would pay up to a hundred francs to be in the front line. The German orchestra begins to have an effect on this whirlpool of bodies, who quiver with excitement and stamp their feet to the dominant strains of the cornet. The dancing speeds up and becomes animated and passionate, revealing the nature, the character of each dancer: the dreamy, voluptuous languor of some, the extravagant, unreasonable violence of others. La Rigolette becomes agitated, and, completely carried away, loses all semblance of human shape or form. Her admirers close in around her, inciting her with their applause, dizzying her with their cheers, until inspiration seizes the prophetess in an explosion of passion, a poetic outburst of flashes of genius, impossible cabrioles, bacchanalian contortions. ...

The dramatic intensity of these public dances has its positive side: they are social levellers where the classes mix freely with one another. Ordinary women rub shoulders with high-born young ladies, their manners become more refined and people acquire a kind of unity and homogeneity. Among this company, partaking of pleasures where they can drown their misery, the most humble of the common people can have their little bit of happiness too. ■

*Viajes* ("Travels") (1849), Vol. 1, Hachette S.A., Buenos Aires, 1955.

# A Chinese general in Paris

## *by Chen Jitong*

*General Chen Jitong, a scholar from a traditional background and a noted calligrapher, was for several years Chinese military attaché in Paris. While there, he struck up a friendship with a number of Western writers and artists, notably with the French painter Félix Regamey, who had brought back to France many sketches and portraits of life in Japan and other countries he had visited. In 1890 Regamey published an article in a French magazine about his visits to Japan and China. The article brought a vigorous and ironic rebuke from the General, an extract from which appears here. Chen Jitong had already published, in French, a book in praise of China entitled* **Les Chinois peints par eux-mêmes** *("The Chinese as they see themselves"), Paris 1884.*

MY excellent friend, M. Félix Regamey, has recently published in this same journal a very interesting article entitled: *Le Japon vu par un artiste.*

I have known and esteemed M. Félix Regamey for a long time, first as a friend, later as an artist and a keen Orientalist. ...

Well, I was greatly surprised by his article in the *Revue bleue*. I realized that M. Regamey has not seen China. True, he has been there, but I am obliged to say to him what he said to Pierre Loti: "Port-of-call observations are risky."

As soon as he sat down on his folding-stool in a Canton street to make some sketches of this interesting and, indeed, unique city, the great artist was immediately discouraged both by the curiosity of the crowd around him and by the remarks they made about his actions and gestures. So he quickly returned to his ship and made for Japan, where he stayed longer and was better received, so that, on his return to France, he placed Japan above China. This, it must be allowed, is quite natural. I would not even take the liberty of reproaching him for it, since he had seen very little of China and a lot of Japan.

But I must say that, had I acted like M. Regamey, if a few unpleasant incidents had sufficed to deprive me of the wish to continue, I should never have got to know Europe. I remember that when I first went to Berlin, in 1877, I was strolling one day in the *Kaiser-Gallerie*—something like the *Passage de l'Opéra*. I was soon surrounded by such a crowd that the gallery was literally blocked. To escape from this stifling curiosity I was obliged to go into a shop and beg the owner to send for the police in order to clear the way for me.

The crowd was very noisy. They were making all kinds of remarks—in German, which I did not yet know. I was less perceptive than my friend Regamey, who realized at once that the Chinese being spoken around him in similar encounters was full of "contemptuous or grotesque abuse".

And this was not an isolated case. When China opened a legation in Berlin, my compatriots were followed around, surrounded and jostled so much by curious passers-by, especially by children, that the rector of the university had to have a special article added to the school regulations saying: "It is forbidden to follow and annoy the Chinese."

One day in Paris, when I was admiring a painting of the Flemish school in the Louvre, two ladies who, it seemed to me, had just come up from the provinces, wagered loudly behind me that I was a woman. I think it was the prettier of the two who lost the bet. ...

Such incidents would have discouraged M. Regamey, but they amused me. For I know that, side by side with this idle curiosity, which is typical of ignorant people of all races and countries, one finds everywhere the politeness and hospitality of those who know what consideration is due to a foreigner. It is this good side of the public which should be seen and appreciated.

True artists are as rare in my country as elsewhere. Those who are less good have the modesty not to show themselves. But in a general way art forms part of our education. Together with handwriting, we learn as children to draw and paint watercolours. The teacher thinks his pupils know nothing until they are able to draw a cloud chased by the winds—which is more difficult to capture than a man falling off a roof. True, the models are not so scarce, there are wind and clouds everywhere, whereas men falling off roofs, of which M. Regamey speaks, are not, I think, encountered very often, except at the *Ambigu* in M. Zola's play *L'Assommoir*. ...

I agree that Chinese children—just like Japanese ones, whatever M. Regamey may say—are often frightened and cry if they see a foreigner. But what's strange about that? I appeal to any father. If M. Regamey had children, he would have seen them run off as children do, at the sight of a new face, and cry if they were obliged to stay. Such have been the fashions, laws and habits of children in all ages and in all countries. It is not the "foreigner" who frightens them, but the "unfamiliar". Thus, in China as elsewhere, babies are devoid of any anti-international instinct. I beg the reader's pardon for having invented this horrible word. ■

*La Chine vue par un artiste—Réponse à M. Félix Regamey*, Revue bleue, Paris, 29 November 1890.

Photo © Giraudon, Paris, Musée Guimet, Paris

*Watercolour by the French painter Félix Regamey (1844-1907), sketched from life in 1874 and used as an illustration for* Promenades japonaises, *a book by Emile Guimet, founder of the Museum of Asian Art in Paris which bears his name.*

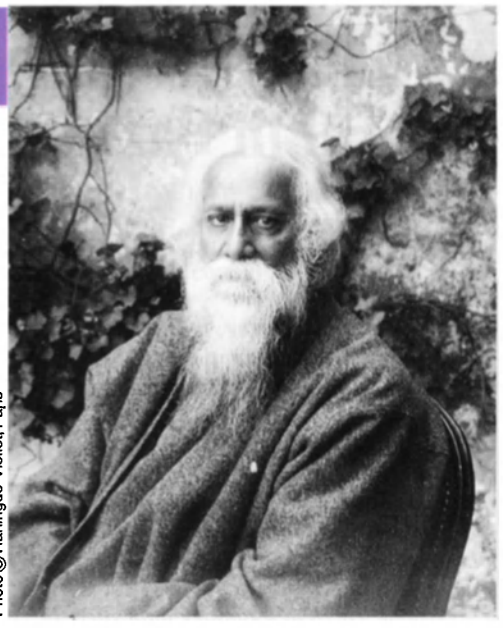

Photo © Harlingue-Viollet, Paris

Rabindranath Tagore

# An Indian poet visits an English parson

*by Rabindranath Tagore*

***The most celebrated figure in modern Indian literature, the great Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore (Nobel Prize for Literature 1913), was a prodigious traveller as well as a prolific writer. In the second half of his life, he visited England and the United States several times, and toured Europe and Asia, making contact with writers and scholars, giving lectures on Indian civilization, working to bring together East and West and expounding his beliefs on the universalism of cultures. In 1912 Tagore was in England. During his visit, the Irish poet and playwright William Butler Yeats read to him and a group of Western writers Tagore's translation into English of his most famous collection,* Gītāñjali *(1910, "Song Offering"). Tagore spent part of the summer of 1912 at the home of a Staffordshire parson.***

*Rural England,* from *A Tagore Reader,* edited by Amiya Chakravarty. Macmillan, London and New York, 1961. Unesco Collection of Representative Works.

IT is August, high summer in England; townsmen are longing to visit the countryside. People rush to parks and open fields; whenever they can get a few more hours they go out of town. Joining the flock of flying townsmen, we also got away.

When we reached the house, our hostess took us to the warm drawing room where a fire had been lit. The house was not an old parsonage but a new one; the garden was also new, perhaps they had themselves cultivated it. Clusters of many coloured flowers fringed the deep lawn. I had never seen such profusion, such freshness of foliage. It is unbelievable, unless one has seen it, how richly green and thick the grass can be.

The rooms of the house were neat and tidy, the library full of books on many subjects; there was not the least trace of negligence. Furniture, decoration and comfort are of a much higher standard than in our country; every object is kept spotlessly clean with vigilant care. Slackness would not be tolerated by these people.

In the late afternoon my host Mr. Outram took us on a walk; the rain had stopped, but there was no gap in the clouds. On all sides was the deep green of undulating meadows divided by low hedges. Though hilly, the landscape had nowhere the roughness of hills; earth's exuberance was held in a beautiful harmony.

While walking, Mr. Outram met an acquaintance and discussed some business. I learned that a rural committee had been appointed for encouraging farmers to do some gardening of their own; some days ago a competition had taken place and this stranger had received the first prize for flowers. Mr. Outram took me to the houses of a few farm-holders. Everyone had a flower garden around their cottage and a kitchen garden, and there was an atmosphere of homely toil leading to happiness and simplicity. After the day's labour in the fields they returned to their homes and did gardening in the evening. I had occasion to see many other proofs of the human fellowship developed through services and welfare work that existed between Mr. Outram and the village people who were under his care.

Institutional religion may occasionally hamper the progress of people but in spite of it the spirit of religion works in this country and there is no doubt that the clergy have kept the inner standards fairly high in the life of the village people. In our country this was the work of the Brahmins but being based on *varna* the system led to inevitable neglect of individual responsibility. I do not believe that all clergymen have accepted the ideal of Christ in their lives, but they are not clergymen by birth, and have to be responsible to society. It would be difficult for them to allow their character or behaviour to be debased, and they have on the whole held up the pursuit of pure character as an ideal of religion.

The religious orders have arranged for a generalized provision of religion for the communities. But this is not enough—the great problems of humanity that present themselves to the country from time to time demand spiritual power and inspiration which institutionalism cannot provide. Such problems should be faced by clergymen with the inner music of Christ's own words in their hearts, by establishing Him in their lives. But how rarely this happens. ■

# The armchair traveller

Many would-be travellers decide to stay at home and let their imagination do the rest. The literature of imaginary travel has a long history and persists today in some forms of science fiction. Among its practitioners have been some of the world's greatest writers, on a canvas ranging from satire, fantasy and humour to utopianism. The following passage is but one illustration of the powers of the imagination to transcend the boundaries of time and place.

## Paris-on-Thames

### *by Joris-Karl Huysmans*

***Duke Jean Floressas des Esseintes, the hero of* A rebours *(1884) by the French novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), is a prey to boredom, despite his nobility and wealth. As a form of escapism, he immerses himself in "the tumultuous spaces of nightmares and dreams". In des Esseintes, the personification of refined decadence, Huysmans created a character who epitomized the spirit of* fin de siècle *European art and literature. At once grotesque and pathetic, a figure in some ways reminiscent of Don Quixote, this armchair traveller who imagines himself in Dickensian England while dining at an English tavern in Paris is one of literature's most memorable portraits of a mind in torment.***

IT was now seven o'clock by his watch: he had just time enough to dine before catching his train, which was due to leave at eight-fifty. He worked out how long the crossing from Dieppe to Newhaven would take, added up the hours on his fingers, and finally told himself: "If the times given in the guide are correct, I shall arrive in London dead on twelve-thirty tomorrow afternoon." ...

While the table was being laid, Des Esseintes inspected his neighbours. ... he saw a crowd of islanders with china-blue eyes, crimson complexions, and earnest or arrogant expressions, skimming through foreign newspapers; but here there were a few women dining in pairs without male escorts, robust Englishwomen with boyish faces, teeth as big as palette-knives, cheeks as red as apples, long hands and long feet. They were enthusiastically attacking helpings of rump-steak pie—meat served hot in mushroom sauce and covered with a crust like a fruit tart.

The voracity of these hearty trencherwomen brought back with a rush the appetite he had lost so long ago. First, he ordered and enjoyed some thick, greasy oxtail soup; next, he examined the list of fish and asked for a smoked haddock, which also came up to his expectations; and then, goaded on by the sight of other people guzzling, he ate a huge helping of roast beef and potatoes and downed a couple of pints of ale, savouring the musty cowshed flavour of this fine pale beer.

In the course of his sedentary life, only two countries had exerted any attraction upon him—Holland and England. He had surrendered to the first of these two temptations; unable to resist any longer, he had left Paris one fine day and visited the cities of the Low Countries, one by one. On the whole, this tour had proved a bitter disappointment to him. He had pictured to himself a Holland such as Teniers and Jan Steen, Rembrandt and Ostade had painted. ...

Still thinking of this past disappointment, he once more consulted his watch: there were only ten minutes now before his train left.

"It's high time to ask for my bill and go," he told himself. ...

"Get up, man, and go," he kept telling himself, but these orders were no sooner given than countermanded. After all, what was the good of moving, when a fellow could travel so magnificently sitting in a chair? Wasn't he already in London, whose smells, weather, citizens, food, and even cutlery, were all about him? What could he expect to find over there, save fresh disappointments such as he had suffered in Holland?

Now he had only just time enough to run across to the station, but an immense aversion for the journey, an urgent longing to remain where he was, came over him with growing force and intensity. Lost in thought, he sat there letting the minutes slip by, thus cutting off his retreat.

"If I went now," he said to himself, "I should have to dash up to the barriers and hustle the porters along with my luggage. How tiresome it would be!"

And once again he told himself:

"When you come to think of it, I've seen and felt all that I wanted to see and feel. I've been steeped in English life ever since I left home, and it would be madness to risk spoiling such unforgettable experiences by a clumsy change of locality. As it is, I must have been suffering from some mental aberration to have thought of repudiating my old convictions, to have rejected the visions of my obedient imagination, and to have believed like any ninny that it was necessary, interesting, and useful to travel abroad."

He looked at his watch.

"Time to go home," he said. And this time he managed to get to his feet, left the tavern, and told the cabby to drive him back to the Gare de Sceaux. Thence he returned to Fontenay with his trunks, his packages, his portmanteaux, his rugs, his umbrellas, and his sticks, feeling all the physical weariness and moral fatigue of a man who has come home after a long and perilous journey. ■

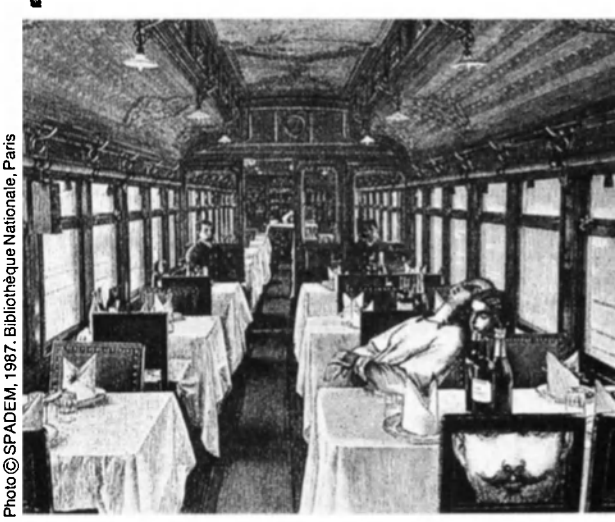

Photo © SPADEM, 1987. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Le train engourdi, *a collage by Max Ernst (1891-1976). The work belongs to a series entitled* La Femme 100 têtes *(1929) which is one of the masterpieces of Surrealist art.*

*A Rebours*, English translation © Robert Baldick, 1959, under the title *Against Nature*.

# Footloose and fancy free

"But the only true travellers are those who leave/ for leaving's sake....". These lines by Baudelaire are still as valid as ever. However serious the ostensible reasons for his journey may be—voyage of discovery, pilgrimage, exploration, trade, archaeological investigation—for the passionate traveller these are merely pretexts. He travels because he is drawn by the call of the open road, the lure of what lies around the next corner.

## The obedience due to princesses

***by Ibn Batutah***

***"No intelligent man," wrote Ibn Djuzayy, the scribe to whom Ibn Batutah dictated his memoirs, "can fail to see that this sheikh is the* traveller of the age.*" But Ibn Batutah (1304-1368 or 1377) was not only the greatest Arab traveller of the Middle Ages, he was one of the greatest travellers of all time. When he set out from his birthplace, Tangiers (Morocco), for Mecca in 1325, he was embarking on an adventurous journey that would take him halfway round the world as far as China and would last almost 30 years. The first stage of his travels took him to the Middle East. During a second, longer stage he visited central and eastern Asia. Finally, after returning to Tangiers, he set off again, this time for the Sahara and the Sudan: his is the only description of these regions to have survived from the Middle Ages. Ibn Batutah was not a geographer like the great al-Idrīsī (1100-c.1165), author of the famous* Kitāb Rudjār *("The Book of Roger"). His observations are those of a curious, intelligent and cultivated Muslim tourist. His account of his travels (the* Rihla *), in addition to its literary value, gives a panoramic picture of the 14th-century world. The extract published here is thought to show Ibn Batutah in the Philippines, before his visit to China.***

ON the second day after our arrival at the port of Cailoûcary, the princess invited the *nâkhodhah,* or skipper of the ship, the *carâny,* or secretary, the merchants, the chiefs, the *tendil,* or general of the infantry, and the *sipâhsâlâr,* or general of the bowmen, to partake of the meal that Ordoudjâ was accustomed to provide as a hospitable gesture. The skipper asked me to go with them; but I refused, for these people are infidels, and it is not lawful to eat their food. When the guests came to the princess's abode, she said, "Has any of your number not come?"

The skipper replied, "Only one man is not here—the *bakchy,* or judge, who does not eat your food."

Ordoudjâ answered, "Send for him."

Her guards sought me out; with them were the companions of the *nâkhodhah,* who said to me, "Obey the princess."

I went and found her seated on her great chair, or ceremonial throne; before her stood women, holding in their hands registers which they presented to her. Around her were old women, or duennas, her counsellors; they were seated below the throne, in sandalwood armchairs. The men, too, were in front of the princess. The throne was covered with silk, and had silk curtains above it, and it was made of sandalwood encrusted with gold leaf. ...

When I had greeted the princess, she said to me in Turkish, *Khochmicen iakhchîmîcen,* which means "Are you well? How are you?" She made me sit down near her. The princess could write Arabic correctly, and she said to one of her servants, *Daouâh oué betec guétoûr*—that is, "Bring the inkwell and paper." He did so, and the princess wrote, "In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate"; then she said to me, "What is that?"

I answered, *Tangry nâm*—that is, "It is the name of God."

She replied, *Khoch,* which means, "That is right." Then she asked me what country I came from, and I told her that I came from India. "The land that pepper comes from?" (Malabar), she said, and I replied that that was so. She asked me a lot of questions about the country and its history, and I answered them all. The

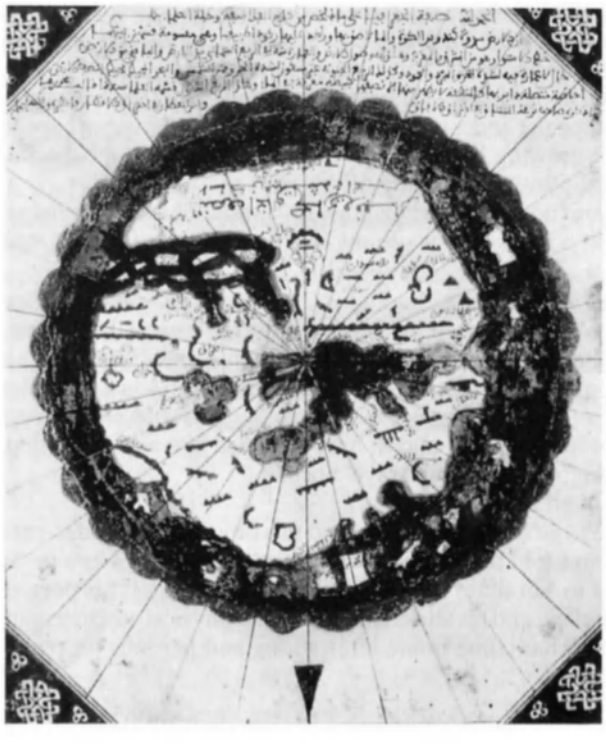

Photo © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

*This masterpiece of 16th century Arab cartography is from the* Portulan of the Mediterranean Sea, *a book of sailing charts by Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al Sharqī of Sfax (Tunisia). Following the usual practice of medieval Arab cartographers, the south is at top of map. The Mediterranean is at centre.*

princess then said, "I really must make war on this country and take it for myself; for I am attracted by its abundance of riches and of troops."

"Do so," I said. The princess caused me to be given: (1) clothing; (2) as much rice as two elephants could carry; (3) two female buffaloes; (4) ten ewes; (5) four pounds of julep or syrup; (6) four *marthabân,* or large porcelain jars, full of ginger, pepper, lemons and mangoes; all was salted, as food is when it is to be eaten at sea. .

The skipper told me that in Ordoudjâ's army there were free women, slave girls and female captives, who fought like men; that she went to war along with the troops, both male and female, invaded her enemies' lands, was present at the battles, and fought the most valiant of her foes. He also told me about a desperate battle that once took place between the princess and one of her foes; many of Ordoudjâ's soldiers were killed, and her whole army was about to flee; then the princess rushed forward, and made her way through the ranks until she reached the king whom she was fighting; she stabbed him to death, and his troops fled; Ordoudjâ returned, bearing her enemy's head on a spear; her enemy's kin redeemed the head by handing over great sums of money to Ordoudjâ; and when the princess returned to her father he gave her this town—Cailoûcary—which had been governed by her brother before her. The skipper also told me that the sons of kings ask Ordoudjâ's hand in marriage, and that she answers, "I shall marry none but a man that fights me and defeats me;" but they will not fight her, for they fear that their reputation would suffer if she were victorious. ■

# Into the heart of Africa

## *by René Caillié*

*Although the French writer René Caillié (1799-1838) was long viewed as a kind of colonialist before his time, a very different figure emerges from the journal, rich in all kinds of observation, of his journey (1824-1828) to the renowned Malian city of Timbuktu. Humble and determined, Caillié died as a result of the sickness and privations he endured on his journey, sacrificing himself to his dream of reaching the mysterious city on the banks of the Niger. A remarkable human document, Caillié's journal is also a unique portrait of still-sovereign Arab and African societies and of cross-cultural exchanges across the Sahara from the Maghreb to Black Africa before the arrival of European colonialism.*

I was born at Mauzé in the *département* of Les Deux Sèvres. My parents were poor and I had the misfortune to lose them when I was still a child. The only education I received was that given in the free village school. As soon as I could read and write I was put to learn a trade, but I soon got tired of this because of the travellers' tales which I devoured during all my spare moments. My young brain was especially excited by reading the story of Robinson Crusoe. I longed to have adventures like his and I already felt an ambition growing within me to achieve fame by making some important discovery.

I was lent geography books and maps. My interest was excited above all by the map of Africa where I saw only desert countries or those marked unknown. Finally this taste became a passion to which I sacrificed everything else. I ceased to take part in the games and amusements of my comrades and locked myself up on Sundays to read travellers' tales and all the travel books I could procure. I told my uncle, who was my guardian, of my wish to travel. He disapproved, painting a vivid picture of the dangers I would encounter at sea and the homesickness I would feel far away from my country and family. In short, he made every effort to dissuade me from my project. But I was not to be put off. I continued to insist on going and he abandoned his opposition.

I had only sixty francs and with this small sum I proceeded to Rochefort in 1816. I embarked on the *Loire,* a store-ship that was about to sail for Senegal. ...

The town of Timbuktu is inhabited by blacks of the Kissur nation who form its main population. There are also many Moors, who engage in trade. They remind me of those Europeans who go to the colonies in the hope of making a fortune. These Moors later return to their own country to live in peace. They have much influence over the natives. Nevertheless the king or governor is a black man. His name is Osman. He is greatly respected by his subjects and is very simple in his habits. Nothing distinguishes him from the others. ...

This prince received us in the middle of his courtyard. He was seated on a beautiful mat with a rich cushion. We remained seated for a moment at a short distance from his person. My host told him that I had come to pay my respects. He told him of my adventures. I could not follow their conversation for they spoke in the Kissur language. Then the king addressed me in Arabic and asked me some questions about the Christians and how they had treated me. We withdrew after a brief visit. I should like to have seen the interior of the house, but was not to have this satisfaction. This prince seemed to be an affable person. He might have been fifty-five years old. His hair was white and curly, he was of average height with a handsome face, very black-skinned, with an aquiline nose, thin lips, a grey beard and large eyes. His clothes, like those of the Moors, were made of European material. He wore a red bonnet with a large piece of muslin around it in the form of a turban, and shoes of morocco leather which resembled our bedroom slippers and were made locally. He made frequent visits to the mosque.

As I have said, there are many Moors established in Timbuktu. Theirs are the finest houses in the town. They grow rich very quickly from trading. They are sent consignments of goods from Adrar and Tafilet, and also from Taouat, Ardamas,

Photo © Jean-Loup Charmet, Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

*Plate from the first edition of René Caillié's book* Voyage à Temboctou et à Jenné *(1830). The caption reads, "Mr. Caillié meditating on the Qur'an and taking notes".*

*Journal d'un voyage à Temboctou et à Jenné, dans l'Afrique Centrale ... pendant les années 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828.* Editions La Découverte, Paris, 1979.

Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers. They receive large quantities of tobacco and miscellaneous products from Europe, which they forward in boats to the town of Jenné and elsewhere. Timbuktu can be regarded as the principal entrepot in this part of Africa. All the salt from the Tudeyni mines is stored there. This salt is transported by camel caravans. The Moors of Morocco and other countries who travel to the Sudan stop in Timbuktu for six to eight months to engage in trade and await a new load for their camels.

The slabs of salt are tied together with rope of inferior quality made from a kind of grass which grows in the neighbourhood of Tandaye. This grass is already dry when it is gathered. Before it is used it is soaked, then buried to protect it from the sun and the east wind which would dry it too quickly. As soon as it is well impregnated with moisture it is disinterred and twisted into rope by hand. The Moors use it for various purposes. Sometimes the camels throw off their loads and when the slabs of salt arrive in the town they are partly broken. This would make them less saleworthy if the merchants did not take the precaution of having them repaired by their slaves, who restore the broken pieces and pack them again with stronger rope made from oxhide. The slaves draw patterns in black on the slabs in the form of grooves, lozenges, etc. They like this work because it enables them to collect a small supply of salt for their own use. As a rule men of this class are less unhappy in Timbuktu than elsewhere. They are well clad, well fed and rarely beaten. They are obliged to attend religious services, and this they do very scrupulously. But they are nonetheless regarded as merchandise and are exported to Tripoli, Morocco and other places on the coast where they are less happy than in Timbuktu. They are always sorry to leave this town although they have no idea of the fate in store for them.

When I was leaving, I saw several slaves take leave of each other in a most touching manner, although they were not acquainted. The similarity of their unhappy situations leads to feelings of sympathy and mutual interest amongst them and they exchange recommendations of good conduct. But the Moors responsible for taking them away often speed up the departure and tear them away from these gentle effusions which might lead to pity for their fate. ■

# Psychic sports

## *by Alexandra David-Néel*

***Anarchist, Buddhist, Orientalist, explorer and writer, Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969) was a woman of indomitable energy and strength of character. Adventurous both as a thinker and as a traveller, this prototype of modern woman made many journeys in the East, above all in Tibet, and became the first European woman to enter Lhasa and spend some time there. She was the author of several works about her travels and about Buddhism, notably* Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet *(1929), from which the extract published here is taken. In it she describes the practice of* toumo, *'psychic exertions whereby the lamas (spiritual leaders in Tibetan Buddhism) generate heat.***

Photo taken from Le Tibet d'Alexandra David-Néel © Editions Plon, Paris

*Alexandra David-Néel dressed as a Tibetan pilgrim and beggar, carrying her belongings on her back. She was wearing this outfit when she entered Lhasa in 1924.*

A kind of examination sometimes concludes the students' period of training in *toumo*. On a moonlit winter's night, those who think they are capable of passing the test go with their masters to the edge of an unfrozen stream. If there is no running water in the region, a hole is pierced in the ice. The chosen night is one of those when a violent wind is blowing. Such nights are not rare in Tibet.

The candidates for the title of *respa** sit down cross-legged on the ground,

* Experts in the art of *toumo*.

completely naked. Sheets are plunged in the freezing water; they freeze and emerge stiff. Each of the pupils wraps himself in a sheet which he is required to unfreeze and dry on his body. As soon as the sheet is dry it is again plunged in the water and the candidate again wraps himself in it. The operation goes on in this way until daybreak. He who has dried most sheets is proclaimed the winner.

It is said that some manage to dry as many as forty sheets in the course of a night. Exaggeration must be taken into account and also the size of the sheets which in some cases may be very small and purely symbolic. However, there is no doubt that the *respas* really do dry on themselves several pieces of fabric the size of a big shawl. I have seen this with my own eyes.

It is necessary to dry at least three in order to be recognized as a true *respa* worthy of wearing the white cotton skirt which marks out the *toumo* graduates. At any rate this was the original rule but it is doubtful whether it is very strictly observed in our time. ...

In addition to the sheet-drying test there are several others. One involves sitting down in the snow. The amount of snow which melts beneath the *respa* and the area which melts around him denotes the degree of heat which he radiates.

It is difficult to get a totally accurate idea of the importance of the results of *toumo*. Nevertheless they seem proven. Hermits live entirely naked or covered with a thin garment all through the winter, in the midst of snow at high altitudes. I am not the only one to have seen them. Members of the expedition which tried to climb Mount Everest have seen some of these anchorites from a distance. As for me, to the slight extent to which I have practised *toumo*, I have obtained striking results. ■

*Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet.* Editions Plon, Paris, 1929.

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*Helmet thought to have belonged to King Srong-brtsan-sgam-po, founder of the unified Kingdom of Tibet in the 7th century. This and other little-known Tibetan artefacts feature in a "Treasures of Tibet" exhibition which is being held at the Natural History Museum, Paris, from April to October 1987.*

# Thoughts from the roof of the world

## *by Jan Myrdal*

***The Silk Road, followed by merchants and travellers since ancient times, links the West to the heart of China. From childhood on, Jan Myrdal dreamt of following in the footsteps of the great medieval traveller Marco Polo. Myrdal is a widely-travelled Swedish writer (born 1927) who has crossed Europe and Asia in the footloose style associated with the poets and writers of the American Beat movement. In 1957 he set out for China in a small car. He was near the Pamirs in central Asia when he fell ill and had to abandon the journey. From his hospital bed his only thought was to continue the journey. The story of his travels was published in Sweden in 1977.***

AS soon as I recovered and was able to think about the future, we resumed our plans to continue our interrupted journey. We applied for permission to go to Tashkurghan, the Pamirs and western China. We had to wait sixteen years for it.

The women bring the meat. Behind them, through the opening in the yurt, we can see the mountains, dazzling white against the dark sky. The meat is mutton—Marco Polo's mutton.* Not only is this a great honour; the meat really tastes like meat.

The people who welcome us here are the same as those among whom we lived seventeen years ago, but on the other side of the mountain. They welcome us with the same hospitality and natural dignity. ... We are seated on a Tadzhik carpet of great beauty, contemplating the dishes of meat and the great jars of curds set before us.

I am happy. To be here makes the seventeen years of waiting worthwhile. And from here the roads lead eastwards. Yet it will never be said of me that I followed the steps of Marco Polo. What use is it to be the first foreigner to travel in the Chinese Pamirs since 1949, what use is it to have made my way here by road and river from the North Cape to the China Sea, what use is it to have toiled for twenty years to achieve all this, when there will still be a few dozen kilometres of the road over the passes between Afghanistan and China that I have not covered? To be only a few dozen kilometres short of my goal is as if I have achieved nothing!

Perhaps I shall get permission if I wait another seventeen years. Pakistan once promised to give me permission to make the ascent to Tashkurghan by this route, and if I also get permission to cross the frontier of Afghanistan and go down to the Vakhan region the journey will be done. And not only Marco Polo's journey, but also the journeys of Fa Xian and Xuan Zang. That is what I dreamt of one summer when I was eleven years old, in a loft in the Swedish countryside—of that and much else.

So perhaps I shall get permission, but by that time I shall certainly not be capable of making the journey. Again we hear music; they are still dancing outside. Above 4,000 metres the altitude starts to cause me problems. ... The height of the pass we were going over was 4,700 metres. I went to have a look at some tombs a little below the road. They were very similar to the tombs in the valley near Tashkurghan, and they also reminded me of the tombs in the Bashgul valley in Nuristan, beneath the Hindu Kush, to the south of these passes. So I had the strength to get as far as this, but I shall certainly not be strong enough to do so in ten or twenty years' time. Even if I got permission, I should be unable to cross the Afghanistan passes, over there. They are even higher than these, here.

It is a strange feeling to be here, to listen to the music and to know that now it is so far, but no further.

I took these notes in the camp east of Tashkurghan. The grey skies gave them a

* There are many wild sheep which are very large because their horns are easily six hands long, and from these horns the shepherds make bowls for eating and the fences where they stay with their animals during the night." *The Book of Marco Polo.*

Photo Michaud © Rapho, Paris

*In the little town of Tashkurghan (Afghanistan), a caravaneer cooks rice for the evening meal.*

touch of sentimentality. Travelling has a dimension that is sometimes overlooked.

The great travellers who came here and later recorded their impressions are all very objective and down-to-earth. They give perfectly convincing reasons for their travels. They were trading, or they were seeking religious writings, or they wanted to make sure that this really is the road to China. They were going to draw maps. That's fine.

We, too, have our objective reasons. I read somewhere that the reason why I travel is to describe what I see. That's fine too.

But this does not really explain why I have spent more months abroad than at home in Sweden, in the last twenty years, and still less does it explain why the great travellers whose accounts of their travels we admire so much undertook their journeys.

For travelling has a third dimension—the strange, tormenting longing for something beyond your reach; setting out at dawn; the pleasant feeling of exhaustion after crossing a mountain; the taste of the sea in your mouth before you can see the sea; the smell of water and growing things when you are still in the desert; reaching a town at dead of night, keeping still in the darkness and listening to new sounds.

Travelling is more than seeing new things; it is leaving them, too. The traveller not only opens doors, he closes them after him, never to return. Yet when he shuts his eyes he can always see the place he left forever. No town is as clearly visible at night as a town you have left for ever.

And it is here, on the roof of the world, just when I realize that I shall never finish the journey I began twenty years ago, that I see how powerful was my need to set out, to go on, to go further, to leave places and to see more. Writing reports and descriptions of what one has seen is a good thing; it is useful and sensible; but in its third dimension it also seems to be the rationalization of a strong desire whose roots reach down to the depths of human life. ■

*Sidenvägen. En resa fran höga Pamir och ili genom Sinkiang och Kansu.* An English translation by A. Henning has been published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, under the title *Silk Road.*

## Bookshelf

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## Correction

We apologize to readers for an error in a caption on page 6 of the February issue in which the Alpine resort of Alpe-d'Huez in the Isère *département* of France is wrongly stated to be in the *département* of Haute-Savoie.

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**Editorial, Sales and Distribution Office:**
Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

**Subscription rates**
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IMPRIME EN FRANCE (Printed in France) - Dépôt légal : C1 - Avril 1987
PHOTOGRAVURE-IMPRESSION : MAURY-IMPRIMEUR S.A., Z.I. route d'Etampes, 45330 MALESHERBES.

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